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THE HISTORICAL ROMANCES OF
GEORG EBERS

ARACHNE

VOLUME ONE

Translated from the German by
Mary J. Safford

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
New York and London

The Dance.

Photogravure from a painting by A. Tschautsch.

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Dedicated

TO FRAU GENERALARZT

LAURA V. BURCKHARDT

(NÉE MÖRICKE)

IN REMEMBRANCE OF OUR LONG,

FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP,

BY THE AUTHOR.

1779119

ARACHNE.

CHAPTER I.

Deep silence brooded over the water and the green islands which rose like oases from its glittering surface. The palms, silver poplars, and sycamores on the largest one were already casting longer shadows as the slanting rays of the sun touched their dark crowns, while its glowing ball still poured a flood of golden radiance upon the bushes along the shore, and the light, feathery tufts at the tops of the papyrus reeds in the brackish water.

More than one flock of large and small waterfowl flew past beneath the silvery cloudlets flecking the lofty azure vault of heaven; here and there a pelican or a pair of wild ducks plunged, with short calls which ceased abruptly, into the lush green thicket, but their cackling and quacking belonged to the voices of Nature, and, when heard, soon died away in the heights of the upper air, or in the darkness of the underbrush that

received the birds. Very few reached the little city of Tennis, which now, during the period of inundation in the year 274 B. C., was completely encircled by water.

From the small island, separated from it by a channel scarcely three arrow-shots wide, it seemed as though sleep or paralysis had fallen upon the citizens of the busy little industrial town, for few people appeared in the streets, and the scanty number of porters and sailors who were working among the ships and boats in the little fleet performed their tasks noiselessly, exhausted by the heat and labour of the day.

Columns of light smoke rose from many of the buildings, but the sunbeams prevented its ascent into the clear, still air, and forced it to spread over the roofs as if it, too, needed rest.

Silence also reigned in the little island diagonally opposite to the harbour. The Tennites called it the Owl's Nest, and, though for no especial reason, neither they nor the magistrates of King Ptolemy II ever stepped upon its shores. Indeed, a short time before, the latter had even been forbidden to concern themselves about the pursuits of its inhabitants; since, though for centuries it had belonged to a family of seafaring folk who were suspected of piracy, it had received, two generations ago, from Alexander the

Great himself, the right of asylum, because its owner, in those days, had commanded a little fleet which proved extremely useful to the conqueror of the world in the siege of Gaza and during the expedition to Egypt. True, under the reign of Ptolemy I, the owners of the Owl's Nest were on the point of being deprived of this favour, because they were repeatedly accused of piracy in distant seas; but it had not been done. Yet for the past two years an investigation had threatened Satabus, the distinguished head of the family, and during this period he, with his ships and his sons, had avoided Tennis and the Egyptian coast.

The house occupied by the islanders stood on the shore facing the little city. It had once been a stately building, but now every part of it seemed to be going to ruin except the central portion, which presented a less dilapidated appearance than the sorely damaged, utterly neglected side wings.

The roof of the whole long structure had originally consisted of palm branches, upon which mud and turf had been piled; but this, too, was now in repair only on the central building. On the right and left wings the rain which often falls in the northeastern part of the Nile Delta, near the sea, had washed off the protect-

ing earth, and the wind had borne it away as dust.

Once the house had been spacious enough to shelter a numerous family and to store a great quantity of goods and provisions, but it was now long since the ruinous chambers had been occupied. Smoke rose only from the opening in the roof of the main building, but its slender column showed from what a very scanty fire it ascended.

The purpose which this was to serve was readily discovered, for in front of the open door of the dwelling, that seemed far too large and—on account of the pillars at the entrance, which supported a triangular pediment—also too stately for its sole occupant, sat an old woman, plucking three ducks.

In front of her a girl, paying no heed to her companion, stood leaning against the trunk of the low, wide-branching sycamore tree near the shore. A narrow boat, now concealed from view by the dense growth of rushes, had brought her to the spot.

The beautiful, motherless young creature, needing counsel, had come to old Tabus to appeal to her art of prophecy and, if she wanted them, to render her any little services; for the old dame on the island was closely bound to Ledscha, the daughter of one of the principal

ship-owners in Tennis, and had once been even more closely united to the girl.

Now, as the sun was about to set, the latter gave herself up to a wild tumult of sweet memories, anxious fears, and yearning expectation.

Not until a cool breath from the neighbouring sea fanned her brow did she throw down the cord and implement with which she had been adding a few meshes to a net, and rising, gaze sometimes across the water at a large white house in the northern part of the city, sometimes at the little harbour or the vessels on the horizon steering toward Tennis, among which her keen eyes discovered a magnificent ship with bright-hued sails.

Drawing a long breath, she enjoyed the coolness which precedes the departure of the day-star.

But the effect of this harbinger of night upon her surroundings was even more powerful than upon herself, for the sun in the western horizon scarcely began to sink slowly behind the papyrus thicket on the shore of the straight Tanite arm of the Nile, dug by human hands, than one new and strange phenomenon followed another.

First a fan, composed of countless glowing rays which spread in dazzling radiance over the west, rose from the vanishing orb and for several

minutes adorned the lofty dome of the deep-blue sky like the tail of a gigantic peacock. Then the glitter of the shining plumes paled. The light-giving body from which they emanated disappeared and, in its stead, a crimson mantle, with gold-bordered, crocus-yellow edges, spread itself over the space it had left until the gleaming tints merged into the deeper hues of the violet.

But the girl paid no heed to this splendid spectacle. Perhaps she noticed how the fading light diffused a delicate rose-hued veil over the light-blue sails, embroidered with silver vines, of the approaching state galley, making its gilded prow glitter more brightly, and saw one fishing boat after another move toward the harbour, but she gave the whole scene only a few careless glances.

Ledscha cared little for the poor fishermen of Tennis, and the glittering state galley could scarcely bring or bear away anything of importance to her.

The epistrategus of the whole province was daily expected. But of what consequence to the young girl were the changes which it was rumoured he intended to introduce into the government of the country, concerning which her father had expressed such bitter dissatisfaction before he set out on his last trip to Pontus?

A very different matter occupied her thoughts, and as, pressing her hand upon her heart, she gazed at the little city, gleaming with crimson hues in the reflection of the setting sun, a strange, restless stir pervaded the former stillness of Nature. Pelicans and flamingoes, geese and ducks, storks and herons, ibises and cranes, bitterns and lapwings, flew in dark flocks of manifold forms from all directions. Countless multitudes of waterfowl darkened the air as they alighted upon the uninhabited islands, and with ear-splitting croaking and cackling, whistling and chirping, clapping and twittering, dropped into the sedges and bushes which concealed their nests, while in the city the doors of the houses opened, and men, women, and children, after toiling at the loom and in the workshop, came out to enjoy the coolness of the evening in the open air.

One fishing boat after another was already throwing a rope to the shore, as the ship with the gay sails approached the little roadstead.

How large and magnificent it was!

None of the king's officials had ever used such a galley, not even the epistrategus of the Delta, who last year had given the banking and the oil trade to new lessees. Besides, the two transports that had followed the magnificent vessel appeared to belong to it.

Ledscha had watched the ships indifferently enough, but suddenly her gaze—and with it the austere beauty of her face—assumed a different expression.

Her large black eyes dilated, and with passionate intentness she looked from the gaily ornamented galley to the shore, which several men in Greek costume were approaching.

The first two had come from the large white house whose door, since sunset, had been the principal object of her attention.

It was Hermon, the taller one, for whom she was waiting with old Tabus. He had promised to take her from the Owl's Nest, after nightfall, for a lonely row upon the water.

Now he was not coming alone, but with his fellow-artist, the sculptor Myrtilus, the nomarch and the notary—she recognised both distinctly—Gorgias, the rich owner of the second largest weaving establishment in Tennis, and several slaves.

What did it mean?

A sudden flush crimsoned her face, now slightly tanned, to the brow, and her lips were compressed, giving her mouth an expression of repellent, almost cruel harshness.

But the tension of her charming features, whose lines, though sharp, were delicately out-

lined, soon vanished. There was still plenty of time before the darkness would permit Hermon to join her unnoticed. A reception, from which he could not be absent, was evidently about to take place.

Yes, that was certainly the case; for now the magnificent galley had approached as near the land as the shallow water permitted, and the whistle of the rowers' flute-player, shouts of command, and the barking of dogs could be heard.

Then a handkerchief waved a greeting from the vessel to the men on shore, but the hand that held it was a woman's. Ledscha would have recognised it had the twilight been far deeper.

The features of the new arrival could no longer be distinguished; but she must be young. An elderly woman would not have sprung so nimbly into the skiff that was to convey her to the land.

The man who assisted her in doing so was the same sculptor, Hermon, for whom she had watched with so much longing.

Again the blood mounted into Ledscha's cheeks, and when she saw the stranger lay her hand upon the shoulder of the Alexandrian who, only yesterday, had assured the young girl of his love with ardent vows, and allow him to lift her

out of the boat, she buried her little white teeth deeply in her lips.

She had never seen Hermon in the society of a woman of his own class, and, full of jealous displeasure, perceived with what zealous assiduity he who bowed before no one in Tennis, paid court to the stranger no less eagerly than did his friend Myrtilus.

The whole scene passed like a shadow in the dusk before Ledscha's eyes, half dimmed by uneasiness, perplexity, and suddenly inflamed jealousy.

The Egyptian twilight is short, and when Hermon disappeared with the new-comer it was no longer possible to recognise the man who entered the very boat in which she was to have taken the nocturnal voyage with her lover, and which was now rowed toward the Owl's Nest.

Surely it would bring her a message from Hermon; and as the stranger, who was now joined by a number of other women and two packs of barking dogs, with their keepers, vanished in the darkness, the skiff already touched the shore close at her side.

CHAPTER II.

In spite of the surrounding gloom, Ledscha recognised the man who left the boat.

The greeting he shouted told her that it was Hermon's slave, Bias, a Biamite, whom she had met in the house of some neighbours who were his relatives and had sharply rebuffed when he ventured to accost her more familiarly than was seemly for one in bondage.

True, in his childhood this man had lived near Tennis as the son of a free papyrus raiser, but when still a lad was sold into slavery in Alexandria with his father, who had been seized for taking part in an insurrection against the last king.

In the service of Archias, his present master's uncle, who had given him to his nephew, and as the slave of the impetuous yet anything but cruel sculptor, Hermon, he had become accustomed to bondage, but was still far more strongly attached to his Biamite race than to the Greeks, to whom, it is true, his master belonged,

but who had robbed him and his family of freedom.

The man of forty did not lack mother wit, and as his hard fate rendered him thoughtful and often led him to use figurative turns of speech, which were by no means intended as jests, he had been called by his first master "Bias" for the sage of Priene.

In the house of Hermon, who associated with the best artists in Alexandria, he had picked up all sorts of knowledge and gladly welcomed instruction. His highest desire was to win esteem, and he often did so.

Hermon prized the useful fellow highly. He had no secrets from him, and was sure of his silence and good will.

Bias had managed to lure many a young beauty in Alexandria, in whom the sculptor had seen a desirable model, to his studio, even under the most difficult circumstances; but he was vexed to find that his master had cast his eye upon the daughter of one of the most distinguished families among his own people. He knew, too, that the Biamites jealously guarded the honour of their women, and had represented to Hermon what a dangerous game he was playing when he began to offer vows of love to Ledscha.

So it was an extremely welcome task to be permitted to inform her that she was awaiting his master in vain.

In reply to her inquiry whether it was the aristocrat who had just arrived who kept Hermon from her, he admitted that she was right, but added that the gods were above even kings, and his master was obliged to yield to the Alexandrian's will.

Ledscha laughed incredulously: "He—obey a woman!"

"He certainly would not submit to a *man*," replied the slave. "Artists, you must know, would rather oppose ten of the most powerful men than one weak woman, if she is only beautiful. As for the daughter of Archias—thereby hangs a tale."

"Archias?" interrupted the girl. "The rich Alexandrian who owns the great weaving house?"

"The very man."

"So it is his daughter who is keeping Hermon? And you say he is obliged to serve her?"

"As men serve the Deity, to the utmost, or truth," replied the slave importantly. "Archias, the father, it is true, imposed upon us the debt which is most tardily paid, and which people, even in this country, call 'gratitude.' We are

under obligations to the old man—there's no denying it—and therefore also to his only child."

"For what?" Ledscha indignantly exclaimed, and the dark eyebrows which met above her delicate nose contracted suspiciously. "I must know!"

"Must!" repeated the slave. "That word is a ploughshare which suits only loose soil, and mine, now that my master is waiting for me, can not be tilled even by the sharpest. Another time! But if, meanwhile, you have any message for Hermon——"

"Nothing," she replied defiantly; but Bias, in a tone of the most eager assent, exclaimed: "One friendly word, girl. You are the fairest among the daughters of the highest Biamite families, and probably the richest also, and therefore a thousand times too good to yield what adorns you to the Greek, that it may tickle the curiosity of the Alexandrian apes. There are more than enough women in the capital to serve that purpose. Trust the experience of a man not wholly devoid of wisdom, my girl. He will throw you aside like an empty wine bottle when he has used you for a model."

"Used?" interrupted Ledscha disdainfully; but he repeated with firm decision: "Yes, used! What could you learn of life, of art and artists,

here in the weaver's nest in the midst of the waves? I know them. A sculptor needs beautiful women as a cobbler wants leather, and the charms he seeks in you he does not conceal from his friend Myrtilus, at least. They are your large almond-shaped eyes and your arms. They make him fairly wild with delight by their curves when, in drawing water, you hold the jug balanced on your head. Your slender arched foot, too, is a welcome morsel to him."

The darkness prevented Bias from seeing Ledscha's features, but it was easy to perceive what was passing in her mind as, hoarse with indignation, she gasped: "How can I know the object of your accusations? but fie upon the servant who would alienate from his own kind master what his soul desires!"

Then Bias changed not only his tone of voice, but his language, and, deeply offended, poured forth a torrent of wrath in the dialect of his people: "If to guard you, and my master with you, from harm, my words had the power to put between you and Hermon the distance which separates yonder rising moon from Tennis, I would make them sound as loud as the lion's roar. Yet perhaps you would not understand them, for you go through life as though you were deaf and blind. Did you ever even ask

yourself whether the Greek is not differently constituted from the sons of the Biamite sailors and fishermen, with whom you grew up, and to whom a lie is an abomination? Yet he is no more like them than poppy juice is like pure water. He and his companions turn life upside down. There is no more distinction between right and wrong in Alexandria than we here in the dark can make between blue and green. To me, the slave, who is already growing old, Hermon is a kind master. I know without your aid what I owe him, and serve him as loyally as any one; but where he threatens to lead to ruin the innocent daughter of the race whose blood flows in my veins as well as yours, and in doing so perhaps finally destroy himself too, conscience commands me to raise my voice as loud as the sentinel crane when danger threatens the flock. Beware, girl, I repeat! Keep your beauty, which is now to be degraded to feast the eyes of gaping Greeks, for the worthiest husband among our people. Though Hermon has vowed, I know not what, your love-dallying will very soon be over; we shall leave Tennis within the next few days. When he has gone there will be one more deceived Biamite who will call down the curse of the gods upon the head of a Greek. You are not the only one who will exe-

crate the destiny that brought us here. Others have been caught in his net too."

"Here?" asked Ledscha in a hollow tone; and the slave eagerly answered: "Where else? And that you may know the truth—among those who visited Hermon in his studio is your own young sister."

"Our Taus? That child?" exclaimed the girl, stretching her hands toward the slave in horror, as if to ward off some impending disaster.

"That child, who, I think, has grown into a very charming girl—and, before her, pretty Gula, the wife of Paseth, who, like your father, is away on his ship." Here, in a tone of triumphant confidence, the answer rang from the Biamite's lips: "There the slanderer stands revealed! Now you are detected, now I perceive the meaning of your threat. Because, miserable slave, you cherish the mad hope of beguiling me yourself, you do your utmost to estrange me from your master. Gula, you say, visited Hermon in his studio, and it may be true. But though I have been at home only a short time, Tennis is too full of the praises of the heroic Greek who, at the risk of his own life, rescued a child from Paseth's burning house, for the tale not to reach my ears from ten or a dozen different quarters. Gula is the mother of the little girl whose life was saved by Hermon's

bold deed, and perhaps the young mother only knocked at her benefactor's door to thank him; but you, base defamer——"

"I," Bias continued, maintaining his composure with difficulty, "I saw Gula secretly glide into our rooms again and again to permit her child's preserver to imitate in clay what he considered beautiful. To seek your love, as you know, the slave forbade himself, although a man no more loses tender desires with his freedom than the tree which is encircled by a fence ceases to put forth buds and blossoms. Eros chooses the slave's heart also as the target for his arrows; but his aim at yours was better than at mine. Now I know how deeply he wounds, and so, as soon as yonder ship in the harbour bears our visitor away again, I shall see you, Schalit's daughter, Ledscha, standing before Hermon's modelling table and behold him scan your beauty to determine what seems worth copying."

The Biamite, panting for breath, had listened to the end. Then, raising her little clinched hand menacingly, she muttered through her set teeth: "Let him try even to touch my veil with his fingers! If I had not been obliged to go away, this would not have happened to my Taus and luckless Gula."

"Scarcely," replied Bias calmly. "If the

chicken runs into the water, the hen can not save it. For the rest—I grew up as a boy in freedom with the husband of your sister, who summoned you to her aid. His father's brick-kiln was next to our papyrus plantation. Then we fared like so many others—the great devour the small, the just cause is the lost one, and the gods are like men. My father, who drew the sword against oppression and violence, was robbed of liberty, and your brother-in-law, in payment for his honest courage, met an early death. Is the story which is told of you here true? I heard that soon after the poor fellow's burial the slaves in the brick-kiln refused to obey his widow. There were a dozen rebellious brick-moulders, and you —one can forgive you much for it—you, the weak girl——"

"I am not weak," interrupted Ledscha proudly. "I could have taught three times twelve of the scoundrels who was master. Now they obey my sister, and yet I wish I had stayed in Tennis. Our Taus," she continued in a more gentle tone, "is still so young, and our mother died when she was a little child; but I, fool, who should have warned her, left her alone, and if she yielded to Hermon's temptations the fault is mine, wholly mine."

During this outburst the light of the fire,

which old Tabus had fed with fresh straw and dry rushes, fell upon the face of the agitated girl. It revealed her thoughts plainly enough, and, pleased with the success of his warning, Bias exclaimed: "And Ledscha, you, too, will not grant him that from which you would so gladly have withheld your sister. So I will go and tell my master that you refuse to give him another appointment."

He had confidently expected an assent, and therefore started indignantly at her exclamation:

"I intend to do just the contrary." Yet she eagerly added, as if in explanation: "He must give me an account of himself, no matter where, and, since it can not be to-day, to-morrow at latest."

The slave, disappointed and anxious, now tried to make her understand how foolish and hard to accomplish her wish was, but she obstinately insisted upon having her own way.

Bias angrily turned his back upon her and, in the early light of the moon, walked toward the shore, but she hastened after him, seized his arm and, with imperious firmness, commanded: "You will stay! I must first know whether Hermon really means to leave Tennis so soon."

"That was his intention early this morning," replied the other, releasing himself from her

grasp. "What are we to do here longer, now that his work is as good as finished?"

"But when is he going?" she urged with increased eagerness.

"Day after to-morrow," was the reply, "in five, or perhaps even in six days, just as it suits him. Usually we do not even know to-day what is to be done to-morrow. So long as the Alexandrian remains, he will scarcely leave her, or Myrtilus either. Probably she will take both hunting with her, for, though a kind, fair-minded woman, she loves the chase, and as both have finished their work, they probably will not be reluctant to go with Daphne."

He stepped into the boat as he spoke, but Ledscha again detained him, asking impatiently: "And 'the work,' as you call it? It was covered with a cloth when I visited the studio, but Hermon himself termed it the statue of a goddess. Yet what it represents— Does it look like my sister Taus—enough like her, I mean, to be recognised?"

A half-compassionate, half-mocking smile flitted over the Biamite's copper-coloured visage, and in a tone of patronizing instruction assumed by the better informed, he began: "You are thinking of the face? Why no, child! What *that* requires can be found in the countenance

of no Biamite, hardly even in yours, the fairest of all."

"And the goddess's figure?" asked Ledscha eagerly.

"For that he first used as a model the fair-haired Heliodora, whom he summoned from Alexandria, and as the wild cat could endure the loneliness only a fortnight, the sisters Nico and Pagis came together. But Tennis was too quiet for them too. The rabble can only be contented among those of their own sort in the capital. But the great preliminary work was already finished before we left Alexandria."

"And Gula—my sister?"

"They were not used for the Demeter," said the slave, smiling. "Just think, that slender scarcely grown creature, Taus, and the matronly patroness of marriage. And Gula? True, her little round face is fresh and not ill-looking—but the model of a goddess requires something more. That can only be obtained in Alexandria. What do not the women there do for the care of the body! They learn it in the Aphrodision, as the boys study reading and writing. But you! What do you here know even about colouring the eyelids and the lips, curling the hair, and treating the nails on the hands and feet? And the clothes! You let them hang just as you put

them on, and my master's work is full of folds and little lines in the robe and the peplos— But I have staid too long already. Do you really insist upon meeting Hermon again?"

"I will and must see him," she eagerly declared.

"Well, then," he answered harshly. "But if you cast my warning to the winds, pity will also fly away with it."

"I do not need it," the girl retorted in a contemptuous tone.

"Then let Fate take its course," said the slave, shrugging his shoulders regretfully. "My master shall learn what you wish. I shall remain at home until the market is empty. There are plenty of servants at your farm. Your messenger shall bring you Hermon's answer."

"I will come myself and wait for it under the acacia," she cried hastily, and went toward the house, but this time it was Bias who called her back.

Ledscha reluctantly fulfilled his wish, but she soon regretted it, for though what he had to say was doubtless kindly meant, it contained a fresh and severe offence: the slave represented to her the possibility that, so long as the daughter of Archias remained his guest, Hermon might rebuff her like a troublesome beggar.

Then, as if sure of her cause, she indignantly cut short his words: "You measure him according to your own standard, and do not know what depends upon it for us. Remind him of the full moon on the coming night and, though ten Alexandrians detained him, he would escape from them to hear what I bring him."

With these words Ledscha again turned her back upon him, but Bias, with a low imprecation, pushed the boat from the shore and rowed toward the city.

CHAPTER III.

When Ledscha heard the strokes of the oars she stopped again and, with glowing cheeks, gazed after the boat and the glimmering silver furrow which it left upon the calm surface of the moonlit water.

Her heart was heavy. The doubts of her lover's sincerity which the slave had awakened tortured her proud soul.

Was Hermon really only trifling mischievously with her affection?

Surely it was impossible.

She would rather endure everything, everything, than this torturing uncertainty.

Yet she was here on the Owl's Nest to seek the aid of old Tabus's magic arts. If any one could give her satisfaction, it was she and the demons who obeyed her will, and the old woman was glad to oblige Ledscha; she was bound to her by closer ties than most people in Tennis knew.

Ledscha had no cause to be ashamed of her

frequent visits to the Owl's Nest, for old Tabus had no equal as a leech and a prophetess, and the corsair family, of which she was the female head, stood in high repute among the Biamites. People bore them no ill-will because they practised piracy; many of their race pursued the same calling, and the sailors made common cause with them.

Ledscha's father, too, was on good terms with the pirates, and when Abus, a handsome fellow who commanded his father's second ship and had won a certain degree of renown by many a bold deed, sought the hand of his oldest daughter, he did not refuse him, and only imposed the condition that when he had gained riches enough and made Ledscha his wife, he would cease his piratical pursuits and, in partnership with him, take goods and slaves from Pontus to the Syrian and Egyptian harbours, and grain and textiles from the Nile to the coasts of the Black Sea.

Young Abus had yielded to this demand, since his grandmother on the Owl's Nest thought it wise to delay for a time the girl's marriage to him, the best beloved of her grandsons; she was then scarcely beyond childhood.

Yet Ledscha had felt a strong affection for the young pirate, in whom she saw the embodiment of heroic manhood. She accompanied him

in imagination through all his perilous expeditions; but she had been permitted to enjoy his society only after long intervals for a few days.

Once he remained absent longer than usual, and this very voyage was to have been his last on a pirate craft—the peaceful seafaring life was to begin, after his landing, with the marriage.

Ledscha had expected her lover's return with eager longing, but week after week elapsed, yet nothing was seen or heard of the ships owned by the Owl's Nest family; then a rumour spread that this time the corsairs were defeated in a battle with the Syrian war-galleys.

The first person who received sure tidings was old Tabus. Her grandson Hanno, who escaped with his life, at the bidding of his father Satabus, who revered his mother, had made his way to her amid great perils to convey the sorrowful news. Two of the best ships in the family had been sunk, and on one the brave Abus, Ledscha's betrothed husband, who commanded it, had lost his life; on the other the aged dame's oldest son and three of her grandchildren.

Tabus fell as if struck by lightning when she heard the tidings, and since that time her tongue had lost its power of fluent speech, her ear its sharpness; but Ledscha did not leave her side, and saved her life by tireless, faithful nursing.

Neither Satabus, the old woman's second son, who now commanded the little pirate fleet, nor his sons, Hanno and Labaja, had been seen in the neighbourhood of Tennis since the disaster, but after Tabus had recovered sufficiently to provide for herself, Ledscha returned to Tennis to manage her father's great household and supply the mother's place to her younger sister, Taus.

She had not recovered the careless cheerfulness of earlier years, but, graver than the companions of her own age, she absented herself from the gaieties of the Biamite maidens. Meanwhile her beauty had increased wonderfully, and, attracting attention far and wide, drew many suitors from neighbouring towns to Tennis. Only a few, however, had made offers of marriage to her father; the beautiful girl's cold, repellent manner disheartened them. She herself desired nothing better; yet it secretly incensed her and pierced her soul with pain to see herself at twenty unwedded, while far less attractive companions of her own age had long been wives and mothers.

The arduous task which she had performed a short time before for her widowed sister had increased the seriousness of her disposition to sullen moroseness.

After her return home she often rowed to the Owl's Nest, for Ledscha felt bound to old Tabus,

and, so far as lay in her power, under obligation to atone for the injury which the horror of her lover's sudden death had inflicted upon his grandmother.

Now she had at last been subjugated by a new passion—love for the Greek sculptor Hermon, who did his best to win the heart of the Biamite girl, whose austere, extremely singular beauty attracted his artist eyes.

To-day Ledscha had come to the sorceress to learn from her what awaited her and her love.

She had landed on the island, sure of favourable predictions, but now her hopes lay as if crushed by hailstones.

If Bias, who was superior to an ordinary slave, was right, she was to be degraded to a toy and useful tool by the man who had already proved his pernicious power over other women of her race, even her own young sister, whom she had hitherto guarded with faithful care. It had by no means escaped her notice that the girl was concealing something from her, though she did not perceive the true cause of the change.

The bright moonbeams, which now wove a silvery web over every surrounding object, seemed like a mockery of her darkened soul.

If the demons of the heights and depths had been subject to her, as to the aged enchantress,

she would have commanded them to cover the heavens with black clouds. Now they must show her what she had to hope or to fear.

She shook her head slightly, as if she no longer believed in a favourable turn of affairs, pushed the little curls which had escaped from the wealth of her black hair back from her forehead with her slender hand, and walked firmly to the house.

The old dame was crouching beside the hearth in the middle room, turning the metal spit, on which she had put the ducks, over the freshly kindled fire.

The smoke hurt her eyes, which were slightly inflamed, yet they seemed to serve their purpose better than her half-dulled ear, for, after a swift glance at Ledscha, she stammered in her faltering speech: "What has happened? Nothing good, certainly. It is written on your face."

The girl nodded assent, pointed with a significant gesture to her eyes and the open air, and went down to the shore again to convince herself that no other vessel was approaching.

What she had to confide to Tabus was intended for her alone, and experience taught how far spoken words could be heard at night over the water.

When she had returned to the hut, she bent

down to the old woman's ear and, holding her curved hand to her lips, cried, "He is not coming!"

Tabus shrugged her shoulders, and the smile of satisfaction which flitted over her brown, wrinkled face showed that the news was welcome.

For her murdered grandson's sake the girl's confession that she had given her heart to a Greek affected her painfully; but Tabus also had something else on her mind for her beautiful darling.

Now she only intimated by a silent nod that she understood Ledscha, and her head remained constantly in motion as the latter continued: "True, I shall see him again to-morrow, but when we part, it will hardly be in love. At any rate—do you hear, grandmother?—to-morrow must decide everything. Therefore—do you understand me?—you must question the cords now, to-night, for to-morrow evening what they advised might be too late."

"Now?" repeated Tabus in surprise, letting her gaze rest inquiringly upon the girl. Then she took the spit from the fire, exclaiming angrily: "Directly, do you mean? As if that could be! As if the stars obeyed us mortals like maids or men servants! The moon must be at

the full to learn the truth from the cords. Wait, child! What is life but waiting? Only have patience, girl! True, few know how to practise this art at your age, and it is alien to many all their lives. But the stars! From them, the least and the greatest, man can learn to go his way patiently, year by year. Always the same course and the same pace. No deviation even one hair's breadth, no swifter or slower movement for the unresting wanderers. No sudden wrath, no ardent desire, no weariness or aversion urges or delays them. How I love and honour them! They willingly submit to the great law until the end of all things. What they appoint for this hour is for it alone, not for the next one. Everything in the vast universe is connected with them. Whoever should delay their course a moment would make the earth reel. Night would become day, the rivers would return to their sources. People would walk on their heads instead of their feet, joy would be transformed to sorrow and power to servitude. Therefore, child, the full moon has a different effect from the waxing or waning one during the other twenty-nine nights of the month. To ask of one what belongs to another is to expect an answer from the foreigner who does not understand your language. How young you are,

child, and how foolish! To question the cords for you in the moonlight now is to expect to gather grapes from thorns. Take my word for that!"

Here she interrupted the words uttered with so much difficulty, and with her blackish-blue cotton dress wiped her perspiring face, strangely flushed by the exertion and the firelight.

Ledscha had listened with increasing disappointment.

The wise old dame was doubtless right, yet before she ventured to the sculptor's workshop the next day she must know at every cost how matters stood, what she had to fear or to hope from him; so after a brief silence she ventured to ask the question, "But are there only the stars and the cords which predict what fate holds in store for one who is so nearly allied to you?"

"No, child, no," was the reply. "But nothing can be done about looking into the future now. It requires rigid fasting from early dawn, and I ate the dates you brought me. I inhaled the odor of the roasting ducks, too, and then—it must be done at midnight; and at midnight your people will be anxious if you are not at home by that time, or perhaps send a slave to seek you here at my house, and that—that must not be done—I must prevent it."

"So you are expecting some one," Ledscha eagerly replied. "And I know who it is. Your son Satabus, or one of your grandsons. Else why are the ducks cooked? And for what is the wine jar which I just took from its hiding place?"

A vehement gesture of denial from Tabus contradicted the girl's conjecture; but directly after she scanned her with a keen, searching glance, and said: "No, no. We have nothing to fear from you, surely. Poor Abus! Through him you will always belong to us. In spite of the Greek, ours you are and ours you will remain. The stars confirm it, and you have always been faithful to the old woman. You are shrewd and steadfast. You would have been the right mate for him who was also wise and firm. Poor, dear, brave boy! But why pity him? Because the salt waves now flow over him? Fools that we are! There is nothing better than death, for it is peace. And almost all of them have found it. Of nine sons and twenty grandsons, only three are left. The others are all calm after so much conflict and danger. How long ago it is since seven perished at once! The last three—their turn will come too. How I envy them that best of blessings, only may they not also go before me!"

Here she lowered her voice, and in a scarcely audible whisper murmured: "You shall know it. My son Satabus, with his brave boys Hanno and Labaja, are coming later in the evening. About midnight—if ye protect them, ye powers above—they will be with me. And you, child—I know your soul to its inmost depths. Before you would betray the last of Abus's kindred——"

"My hand and tongue should wither!" Ledscha passionately interrupted, and then, with zealous feminine solicitude, she asked whether the three ducks would suffice to satisfy the hunger of these strong men.

The old woman smiled and pointed to a pile of fresh leaves heaped one above another, beneath which lay several fine shad. They were not to be cooked until the expected visitors arrived, and she had plenty of bread besides.

In the presence of these proofs of maternal solicitude the morose, wrinkled countenance of the old sorceress wore a kind, almost tender expression, and the light of joyous anticipation beamed upon her young guest from her red-rimmed eyes.

"I am to see them once more!" cried Tabus in an agitated tone. "The last—and all three, all! If they— But no; they will not set to work so near Pelusium. No, no! They will not, lest

they should spoil the meeting with the old woman. Oh, they are kind; no one knows how kind my rough Satabus can be. He would be your father now, girl, if we could have kept our Abus —he was the best of all—longer. It is fortunate that you are here, for they must see you, and it would have been hard for me to fetch the other things: the salt, the Indian pepper, and the jug of Pelusinian zythus, which Satabus is always so fond of drinking."

Then Ledscha went into the ruinous left wing of the house, where she took from a covered hole in the floor what the old woman had kept for the last of her race, and she performed her task gladly and with rare skill.

Next she prepared the fish and the pan, and while her hands were moving busily she earnestly entreated the old woman to gratify her wish and look into the future for her.

Tabus, however, persisted in her refusal, until Ledscha again called her "grandmother," and entreated her, by the heads of the three beloved ones whom she expected, to fulfil her desire.

Then the old dame rose, and while the girl, panting for breath, took the roasted ducks from the spit, the former, with her own trembling hands, drew from the little chest which she kept concealed behind a heap of dry reeds, branches,

and straw, a shining copper dish, tossed the gold coins which had been in it back into the box, and moistened the bottom with the blackish-red juice of the grape from the wine jar.

After carefully making these preparations she called Ledscha and repeated that the cords possessed the power of prophecy only on nights when the moon was full, and that she would use another means of looking into the future.

Then she commanded the girl to let her hands rest now and to think of nothing except the questions whose answer she had at heart. Lastly, she muttered into the vessel a series of incantations, which Ledscha repeated after her, and gazed as if spellbound at the dark liquid which covered the bottom.

The girl, panting for breath, watched every movement of the sorceress, but some time elapsed ere the latter suddenly exclaimed, "There he is!" and then, without removing her eyes from the bottom of the vessel, she went on, with faltering accents, as though she was describing a scene close before her eyes. "Two young men—both Greeks, if the dress does not deceive—one is at your right hand, the other at your left. The former is fair-haired; the glance of his eyes is deep and constant. It is he, I think— But no! His image is fading, and you are turning your

back upon him. You do it intentionally. No, no, you two are not destined for each other. You think of the one with the waving black hair and beard—of him alone. He is growing more and more distinct—a handsome man, and how his brow shines! Yet his glance—it sees more than that of many others, but, like the rest of his nature, it lacks steadfastness."

Here she paused, raised her shaking head, looked at Ledscha's flushed face, and in a grave, warning tone, said: "Many signs of happiness, but also many dark shadows and black spots. If he is the one, child, you must be on your guard."

"He is," murmured the girl softly, as if speaking to herself.

But the deaf old crone had read the words from her lips, and while gazing intently at the wine, went on impatiently: "If the picture would only grow more distinct! As it was, so it has remained. And now! The image of the fair man with the deep-blue eyes melts away entirely, and a gray cloud flutters between you and the other one with the black beard. If it would only scatter! But we shall never make any progress in this way. Now pay attention, girl."

The words had an imperious tone, and with outstretched head and throbbing heart Ledscha awaited the old woman's further commands.

They came at once and ordered her to confess, as freely and openly as though she was talking to herself, where she had met the man whom she loved, how he had succeeded in snaring her heart, and how he repaid her for the passion which he had awakened.

These commands were so confused and mingled in utterance that any one less familiar with the speaker would scarcely have comprehended what they required of her, but Ledscha understood and was ready to obey.

CHAPTER IV.

This reserved, thoroughly self-reliant creature would never have betrayed to any human being what moved her soul and filled it sometimes with inspiring hope, sometimes with a consuming desire for vengeance; but Ledscha did not shrink from confiding it to the demons who were to help her to regain her composure.

So, obeying a swift impulse, she threw herself on her knees by the old woman's side. Then, supporting her head with her hands, she gazed at the still glimmering fire, and, as if one memory after another received new life from it, she began the difficult confession:

"I returned from my sister's brick-kiln a fortnight ago," she commenced, while the sorceress leaned her deaf ear nearer to her lips. "During my absence something—I know not what it was—had saddened the cheerful spirits of my young sister Taus. At the recent festival of Astarte she regained them, and obtained some beautiful bright flowers to make wreaths for her-

self and me. So we joined the procession of the Tennis maidens and, as the fairest, they placed us directly behind the daughters of Hiram.

"When we were about to go home after the sacrifice, two young Greeks approached us and greeted Hiram's daughters and my sister also.

"One was a quiet young man, with narrow shoulders and light, curling hair; the other towered above him in stature. His powerful figure was magnificently formed, and he carried his head with its splendid black beard proudly.

"Since the gods snatched Abus from me, though so many men had wooed me, I had cared for no one; but the fair-haired Greek with the sparkling light in his blue eyes and the faint flush on his cheeks pleased me, and his name, 'Myrtilus,' fell upon my ear like music. I was glad when he joined me and asked, as simply as though he were merely inquiring the way, why he had never seen me, the loveliest among the beauties in the temple, in Tennis.

"I scarcely noticed the other. Besides, he seemed to have eyes only for Taus and the daughters of Hiram. He played all sorts of pranks with them, and they laughed so heartily that, fearing the strangers, of whom there was no lack, might class them with the Hieroduli who followed the sailors and young men in the tem-

ple grottoes, I motioned to Taus to restrain herself.

"Hermon—this was the name of the tall, bearded man—noticed it and turned toward me. In doing so his eyes met mine, and it seemed as though sweet wine flowed through my veins, for I perceived that my appearance paralyzed his reckless tongue. Yet he did not accost me; but Myrtilus, the fair one, entreated me not to lessen for the beautiful children the pleasure to which we are all born.

"I thought this remark foolish—how much sorrow and how little pleasure I had experienced from childhood!—so I only shrugged my shoulders disdainfully.

"Then the black-bearded man asked if, young and beautiful as I was, I had forgotten to believe in mirth and joy. My reply was intended to tell him that, though this was not the case, I did not belong to those who spent their lives in loud laughing and extravagant jests.

"The answer was aimed at the black-bearded man's reckless conduct; but the fair-haired one parried the attack in his stead, and retorted that I seemed to misunderstand his friend. Pleasure belonged to a festival, as light belonged to the sun; but usually Hermon laboured earnestly, and only a short time before he had saved the

little daughter of Gula, the sailor's wife, from a burning house.

"The other did not let Myrtilus finish, but exclaimed that this would only confirm my opinion of him, for this very leap into the flames had afforded him the utmost joy.

"The words fell from his bearded lips as if the affair was very simple, a mere matter of course, yet I knew that the bold deed had nearly cost him his life—I said to myself that no one but our Abus would have done it, and then I may have looked at him more kindly, for he cried out that I, too, understood how to smile, and would never cease doing so if I knew how it became me.

"As he spoke he turned away from the girls to my side, while Myrtilus joined them. Hermon's handsome face had become grave and thoughtful, and when our eyes met I could have wished that they would never part again. But on account of the others I soon looked down at the ground and we walked on in this way, side by side, for some distance; but as he did not address a word to me, only sometimes gazed into my face as if seeking or examining, I grew vexed and asked him why he, who had just entertained the others gaily enough, had suddenly become so silent.

"He shook his head and answered—every

word impressed itself firmly upon my memory: 'Because speech fails even the eloquent when confronted with a miracle.'

"What, except me and my beauty, could be meant by that? But he probably perceived how strangely his words confused me, for he suddenly seized my hand, pressing it so firmly that it hurt me, and while I tried to withdraw it he whispered, 'How the immortals must love you, that they lend you so large a share of their own divine beauty!'"

"Greek honey," interposed the sorceress, "but strong enough to turn such a poor young head. And what more happened? The demons desire to hear all—all—down to the least detail —all!"

"The least detail?" repeated Ledscha reluctantly, gazing into vacancy as if seeking aid.

Then, pressing her hand on her brow, she indignantly exclaimed: "Ah, if I only knew myself how it conquered me so quickly! If I could understand and put it into intelligible words, I should need no stranger's counsel to regain my peace of mind. But as it is! I was driven by my anxiety from temple to temple, and now to you and your demons. I went from hour to hour as though in a burning fever. If I left the house firmly resolved to bethink myself

and, as I had bidden my sister, avoid danger and the gossip of the people, my feet still led me only where he desired to meet me. Oh, and how well he understood how to flatter, to describe my beauty! Surely it was impossible not to believe in it and trust its power!"

Here she hesitated, and while gazing silently into vacancy a sunny light flitted over her grave face, and, drawing a long breath, she began again: "I could curse those days of weakness and ecstasy which now—at least I hope so—are over. Yet they were wonderfuly beautiful, and never can I forget them!"

Here she again bowed her head silently, but the old dame nodded encouragingly, saying eagerly; "Well, well! I understand all that, and I shall learn what more is coming, for whatever appears in the mirror of the wine is infallible—but it must become still more distinct. Let me first conjure up the seventy-seven great and the seven hundred and seventy-seven little demons. They will do their duty, if you open your heart to us without reserve."

This demand sounded urgent enough, and Ledscha pressed her head against the old woman's shoulder as if seeking assistance, exclaiming: "I can not—no, I can not! As if the spirits who obey you did not know already what had hap-

pened and will happen in the future! Let them search the depths of my soul. There they will see, with their own eyes, what I should never, never succeed in describing. I could not tell even you, grandmother, for who among the Biamites ever found such lofty, heart-bewitching words as Hermon? And what looks, what language he had at command, when he desired to put an end to my jealous complaints! Could I still be angry with him, when he confessed that there were other beauties here whom he admired, and then gazed deep into my eyes and said that when I appeared they all vanished like the stars at sunrise? Then every reproach was forgotten, and resentment was transformed into doubly ardent longing. This, however, by no means escaped his keen glance, which detects everything, and so he urged me with touching, ardent entreaties to go with him to his studio, though but for one poor, brief hour."

"And you granted his wish?" Tabus anxiously interrupted.

"Yes," she answered frankly, "but it was the evening of the day before yesterday—that was the only time. Secrecy—nothing, Grandmother, was more hateful to me from childhood."

"But he," the old woman again interrupted,

"he—I know it—he praised it to you as the noblest virtue."

A silent nod from Ledscha confirmed this conjecture, and she added hesitatingly: "'Only far from the haunts of men,' he said, 'when the light had vanished, did we hear the nightingale trill in the dark thickets.' Those are his own words, and though it angers you, Grandmother, they are true."

"Until the secrecy is over, and the sun shines upon misery," the sorceress answered in her faltering speech, with menacing severity. "And beneath the tempter's roof you enjoyed the lauded secret love until the cock roused you?"

"No," replied Ledscha firmly. "Did I ever tell you a lie, that you look at me so incredulously?"

"Incredulously?" replied the old woman in protest. "I only trembled at the danger into which you plunged."

"There could be no greater peril," the girl admitted. "I foresaw it clearly enough, and yet—this is the most terrible part of it—yet my feet moved as if obeying a will of their own, instead of mine, and when I crossed his threshold, resistance was silenced, for I was received like a princess. The lofty, spacious apartment was

brilliantly illuminated, and the door was garlanded with flowers.

"It was magnificent! Then, in a manner as respectful as if welcoming an illustrious guest, he invited me to take my place opposite to him, that he might form a goddess after my model. This was the highest flattery of all, and I willingly assumed the position he directed, but he looked at me from every side, with sparkling eyes, and asked me to let down my hair and remove the veil from the back of my head. Then —need I assure you of it?—my blood boiled with righteous indignation; but instead of being ashamed of the outrage, he raised his hand to my head and pulled the veil. Resentment and wrath suddenly flamed in my soul, and before he could detain me I had left the room. In spite of his representations and entreaties, I did not enter it again."

"Yet," asked the sorceress in perplexity, "you once more obeyed his summons?"

"Yesterday also I could not help it," Ledscha answered softly.

"Fool!" cried Tabus indignantly, but the girl exclaimed, in a tone of sincere shame: "You do well to call me that. Perhaps I deserve still harsher names, for, in spite of the sternness with which I forbade him ever to remind me of the

studio by even a single word, I soon listened to him willingly when he besought me, if I really loved him, not to refuse what would make him happy. If I allowed him to model my figure, his renown and greatness would be secured. And how clearly he made me understand this! I could not help believing it, and at last promised that, in spite of my father and the women of Tennis, I would grant all, all, and accompany him again to the work room if he would have patience until the night of the next day but one, when the moon would be at the full."

"And he?" asked Tabus anxiously.

"He called the brief hours which I required him to wait an eternity," replied the girl, "and they seemed no less long to me—but neither entreaties nor urgency availed; what you predicted for me from the cords last year strengthened my courage. I should wantonly throw away—I constantly reminded myself—whatever great good fortune Fate destined for me if I yielded to my longing and took prematurely what was already so close at hand; for—do you remember?—at that time it was promised that on a night when the moon was at the full a new period of the utmost happiness would begin for me. And now—unless everything deceives me—now it awaits me. Whether it will come with the full

moon of to-morrow night, or the next, or the following one, your spirits alone can know; but yesterday was surely too soon to expect the new happiness."

"And he?" asked the old dame.

"He certainly did not make it easy for me," was the reply, "but as I remained firm, he was obliged to yield. I granted only his earnest desire to see me again this evening. I fancy I can still hear him exclaim, with loving impetuosity, that he hated every day and every night which kept him from me. And now? Now? For another's sake he lets me wait for him in vain, and if his slave does not lie, this is only the beginning of his infamous, treacherous game."

She had uttered the last words in a hoarse cry, but Tabus answered soothingly: "Hush, child, hush! The first thing is to see clearly, if I am to interpret correctly what is shown me here. The demons are to be fully informed—they have required it. But you? Did you come to hear whether the spirits still intend to keep the promise they made then?"

Ledscha eagerly assented to this question, and the old woman continued urgently: "Then tell me first what suddenly incenses you so violently against the man whom you have so highly praised?"

The girl related what had formerly been rumoured in Tennis, and which she had just heard from the slave.

He had lured other women—even her innocent young sister—to his studio. Now he wanted to induce Ledscha to go there, not from love, but merely to model her limbs so far as he considered them useful for his work. He was in haste to do so because he intended to return to the capital immediately. Whether he meant to leave her in the lurch after using her for his selfish purposes, she also desired to learn from the sorceress. But she would ask him that question herself to-morrow. Woe betide him if the spirits recognised in him the deceiver she now believed him.

Hitherto Tabus had listened quietly, but when she closed her passionate threats with the exclamation that he also deserved punishment for alienating Gula, the sailor's wife, from her absent husband, the enchantress also lost her composure and cried out angrily: "If that is true, if the Greek really committed that crime—then certainly—— The foreigners destroy, with their laughing levity, much that is good among us. We must endure it; but whoever broke the Biamite's marriage bond, from the earliest times, forfeited his life, and so, the gods be

thanked, it has remained. This very last year the fisherman Phabis killed with a hammer the Alexandrian clerk who had stolen into his house, and drowned his faithless wife. But your lover—though you should weep for sorrow till your eyes are red——"

"I would denounce the traitor, if he made himself worthy of death," Ledscha passionately interrupted, with flashing eyes. "What portion of the slave's charge is true will appear at once —and if it proves correct, to morrow's full moon shall indeed bring me the greatest bliss; for though, when I was younger and happier, I contradicted Abus when he declared that one thing surpassed even the raptures of love—satisfied vengeance—now I would agree with him."

A loud cry of "Right! right!" from the old crone's lips expressed the gray-haired Biamite's pleasure in this worthy daughter of her race.

Then she again gazed at the wine in the vessel, and this time she did so silently, as if spellbound by the mirror on its bottom.

At last, raising her aged head, she said in a tone of the most sincere compassion: "Poor child! Yes, you would be cruelly and shamefully deceived. Tear your love for this man from your heart, like poisonous hemlock. But

the full moon which is to bring you great happiness is scarcely the next, perhaps not even the one which follows it, but surely and certainly a later one will rise, by whose light the utmost bliss awaits you. True, I see it come from another man than the Greek."

The girl had listened with panting breath. She believed as firmly in the infallibility of the knowledge which the witch received from the demons who obeyed her as she did in her own existence.

All her happiness, all that had filled her joyous soul with freshly awakened hopes, now lay shattered at her feet, and sobbing aloud she threw herself down beside the old woman and buried her beautiful face in her lap.

Completely overwhelmed by the great misfortune which had come upon her, without thinking of the vengeance which had just made her hold her head so proudly erect, or the rare delight which a later full moon was to bring, she remained motionless, while the old woman, who loved her and who remembered an hour in the distant past when she herself had been dissolved in tears at the prediction of another prophetess, laid her trembling hand upon her head.

Let the child weep her fill.

Time, perhaps vengeance also, cured many a

heartache, and when they had accomplished this office upon the girl who had once been betrothed to her grandson, perhaps the full moon bringing happiness, whose appearance first the cords, then the wine mirror in the bottom of the vessel had predicted, would come to Ledscha, and she believed she knew at whose side the girl could regain what she had twice lost—satisfaction for the young heart that yearned for love.

"Only wait, wait," she cried at last, repeating the consoling words again and again, till Ledscha raised her tear-stained face.

Impulse urged her to kiss the sufferer, but as she bent over the mourner the copper dish slipped from her knees and fell rattling on the floor.

Ledscha started up in terror, and at the same moment the Alexandrian's packs of hounds on the shore opposite to the Owl's Nest began to bark so loudly that the deaf old woman heard the baying as if it came from a great distance; but the girl ran out into the open air and, returning at the end of a few minutes, called joyously to the sorceress from the threshold, "They are coming!"

"They, they," faltered Tabus, hurriedly pushing her disordered gray hair under the veil on

the back of her head, while exclaiming, scarcely able to use her voice in her joyous excitement: "I knew it. He keeps his word. My Satabus is coming. The ducks, the bread, the fish, girl! Good, loyal heart."

Then a wide, long shadow fell across the dimly lighted room, and from the darkened threshold a strangely deep, gasping peal of laughter rang from a man's broad breast.

"Satabus! My boy!" the witch's shriek rose above the peculiar sound.

"Mother!" answered the gray-bearded lips of the pirate.

For one short moment he remained standing at the door with outstretched arms. Then he took a step toward the beloved being from whom he had been separated more than two years, and suddenly throwing himself down before her, while his huge lower limbs covered part of the floor, he stretched his hands toward the little crooked old woman, who had not strength to rise from her crouching posture, and seizing her with loving impetuosity, lifted her as if she were a child, and placing her on his knees, drew her into a close embrace.

Tabus willingly submitted to this act of violence, and passing her thin left arm around her son's bull neck with her free hand, patted his

bearded cheeks, wrinkled brow, and bushy, almost white hair.

No intelligible words passed the lips of either the mother or the son at this meeting; nothing but a confused medley of tender and uncouth natural sounds, which no language knows.

Yet they understood each other, and Ledscha, who had moved silently aside, also comprehended that these low laughs, moans, cries, and stammers were the expressions of love of two deeply agitated hearts, and for a moment an emotion of envy seized her.

The gods had early bereft her of her mother, while this savage fighter against the might of the waves, justice, law, and their pitiless, too powerful defenders, this man, already on the verge of age, still possessed *his*, and sunned his rude heart in her love.

It was some time before the old pirate had satisfied his yearning for affection and placed his light burden down beside the fire.

Tabus now regained the power to utter distinct words, and, difficult as it was for her half paralyzed tongue to speak, she poured a flood of tender pet names and affectionate thanks upon the head of her rude son, the last one left, who had grown gray in bloody warfare; but with the eyes of her soul she again saw in him the little

boy whom, with warm maternal love, she had once pressed to her breast and cradled in her arms.

When, in his rough fashion, he warmly returned her professions of tenderness, her eyes grew wet with tears, and at the question what he could still find in her, a withered, good-for-nothing little creature who just dragged along from one day to another, an object of pity to herself, he again burst into his mighty laugh, and his deep voice shouted: "Do you want to know that? But where would be the lime that holds us on the ships if you were no longer here? The best capture wouldn't be worth a drachm if we could not say, 'Hurrah! how pleased the old mother will be when she hears it!' And when things go badly, when men have been wounded or perished in the sea, we should despair of our lives if we did not know that whatever troubles our hearts the old mother feels, too, and we shall always get from her the kind words needed to press on again. And then, when the strait is sore and life is at stake, whence would come the courage to cast the die if we did not know that you are with us day and night, and will send your spirits to help us if the need is great? Hundreds of times they rushed to our aid just at the right time, and assisted us to hew off the hand of the

foe which was already choking us. But that is only something extra, which we could do without, if necessary. That you are here, that a man still has his dear mother, whose heart wishes us everything good and our foes death and destruction, whose aged eyes will weep if anything harms us, that, mother dear, *that* is the main thing!"

He bent his clumsy figure over her as he spoke, and cautiously, as if he were afraid of doing her some injury, kissed her head with tender care.

Then, rising, he turned to Ledscha, whom he always regarded as his dead son's betrothed bride, and greeted her with sincere kindness.

Her great beauty strengthened his plan of uniting her to his oldest son, and when the latter entered the house he cast a searching glance at him.

The result was favourable, for a smile of satisfaction flitted over his scarred features.

The young pirate's stately figure was not inferior in height to the old one's, but his shoulders were narrower, his features less broad and full, and his hair and beard had the glossy raven hue of the blackbird's plumage.

The young man paused on the threshold in embarrassment, and gazed at Ledscha with

pleased surprise. When he saw her last his grandmother had not been stricken by paralysis, and the girl was the promised wife of his older brother, to whom custom forbade him to raise his eyes.

He had thought of her numberless times as the most desirable of women. Now nothing prevented his wooing her, and finding her far more beautiful than memory had showed her, strengthened his intention of winning her.

This purpose had matured in the utmost secrecy. He had concealed it even from his father and his brother Labaja, who was still keeping watch on the ships, for he had a reserved disposition, and though obliged to obey his father, wherever it was possible he pursued his own way.

Though Satabus shared Hanno's wish, it vexed him that at this meeting, after so long a separation, his son should neglect his beloved and honoured mother for the sake of a beautiful girl.

So, turning his back on Ledscha, he seized the young giant's shoulder with a powerful grip to drag him toward the old woman; but Hanno perceived his error, and now, in brief but affectionate words, showed his grandmother that he, too, rejoiced at seeing her again.

The sorceress gazed at her grandson's stal-

wart figure with a pleasant smile, and, after welcoming him, exclaimed to Ledscha: "It seems as if Abus had risen from the grave."

The girl vouchsafed her dead lover's brother a brief glance, and, while pouring oil upon the fish in the pan, answered carelessly: "He is a little like him."

"Not only in person," remarked the old pirate, with fatherly pride, and pointing to the broad scar across the young man's forehead, visible even in the dim light, he added by way of explanation: "When we took vengeance for Abus, he bore away that decoration of honour. The blow nearly made him follow his brother, but the youth first sent the souls of half a dozen enemies to greet him in the nether world."

Then Ledscha held out her hand to Hanno, and permitted him to detain it till an ardent glance from his black eyes met hers, and she withdrew it blushing. As she did so she said to Tabus: "You can put them on the fire, and there stands whatever else you need. I must go home now."

In taking leave of the men she asked if she could hope to find them here again the next day.

"The full moon will make it damnably light," replied the father, "but they will scarcely venture to assail the right of asylum, and the ships an-

chored according to regulation at Tanis, with a cargo of wood from Sinope. Besides, for two years people have believed that we have abandoned these waters, and the guards think that if we should return, the last time to choose would be these bright nights. Still, I should not like to decide anything positively about the morrow until news came from Labaja."

"You will find *me*, whatever happens," Hanno declared after his father had ceased speaking.

Old Tabus exchanged a swift glance with her son, and Satabus said: "He is his own master. If I am obliged to go—which may happen —then, my girl, you must be content with the youth. Besides, you are better suited to him than to the graybeard."

He shook hands with Ledscha as he spoke, and Hanno accompanied her to her boat.

At first he was silent, but as she was stepping into the skiff he repeated his promise of meeting her here the following night.

"Very well," she answered quickly. "Perhaps I may have a commission to give you."

"I will fulfil it," he answered firmly.

"To-morrow, then," she called, "unless something unexpected prevents."

But when seated on the thwart she again turned to him, and asked: "Does it need a long

time to bring your ship, with brave men on board, to this place?"

"We can be here in four hours, and with favourable winds still sooner," was the reply.

"Even if it displeases your father?"

"Even then, and though the gods, many as there are, should forbid—if only your gratitude will be gained."

"It will," she answered firmly, and the water plashed lightly under the strokes of her oars.

CHAPTER V.

In the extreme northern portion of the little city of Tennis a large, perfectly plain white-washed building stood on an open, grass-grown square.

The side facing the north rested upon a solid substructure of hard blocks of hewn stone washed by the waves.

This protecting wall extended along both sides of the long, plain edifice, and prevented the water from overflowing the open space which belonged to it.

Archias, the owner of the largest weaving establishment in Tennis, the father of the Alexandrian aristocrat who had arrived the evening before, was the owner of the house, as well as of the broad plain on which he had had it built, with the indestructible sea wall, to serve as a storehouse to receive the supplies of linen, flax, and wool which were manufactured in his factories.

It was favourably situated for this purpose,

for the raw materials could be moved from the ships which brought them to Tennis directly into the building. But as the factories were at a considerable distance, the transportation required much time and expense, and therefore Archias had had a canal dug connecting the workshops with the water, and at its end erected a new storehouse, which rendered a second transportation of the ships' cargoes unnecessary.

The white mansion had not yet been devoted to any other purpose when the owner determined to offer the spacious empty rooms of the warehouse to his nephews, the sculptors Hermon and Myrtilus, for the production of two works with whose completion he associated expectations of good fortune both for the young artists, who were his nephews and wards, and himself.

The very extensive building which now contained the studios and spacious living apartments for the sculptors and their slaves would also have afforded ample room for his daughter and her attendants, but Daphne had learned from the reports of the artists that rats, mice, and other disagreeable vermin shared the former storehouse with them, so she had preferred to have tents pitched in the large open space which belonged to it.

True, the broad field was exposed to the

burning sun, and its soil was covered only with sand and pitiably scorched turf, but three palm trees, a few sunt acacias, two carob trees, a small clump of fig trees, and the superb, wide-branched sycamore on the extreme outer edge had won for it the proud name of a "garden."

Now a great change in its favour had taken place, for Daphne's beautiful tent, with walls and top of blue and white striped sail-cloth, and the small adjoining tents of the same colours, gave it a brighter aspect.

The very roomy main tent contained the splendidly furnished sitting and dining rooms. The beds occupied by Daphne and her companion, Chrysilla, had been placed in an adjoining one, which was nearly as large, and the cook, with his assistants, was quartered in a third.

The head keeper, the master of the hounds, and most of the slaves remained in the transports which had followed the state galley. Some had slept under the open sky beside the dog kennel hastily erected for Daphne's pack of hounds.

So, on the morning after the wholly unexpected arrival of the owner's daughter, the "garden" in front of the white house, but yesterday a desolate field, resembled an encampment, whose busy life was varied and noisy enough.

Slaves and freedmen had been astir before sunrise, for Daphne was up betimes in order to begin the hunt in the early hour when the birds left their secret nooks on the islands.

Her cousins, the young sculptors, to please her, had gone out, too, but the sport did not last long; for when the market place of Tennis, just between the morning and noontide hours, was most crowded, the little boats which the hunters had used again touched the shore.

With them and Daphne's servants seafaring men also left the boats—Bianite fishermen and boatmen, who knew the breeding places and nests of the feathered prey—and before them, barking loudly and shaking their dripping bodies, the young huntress's brown and white spotted dogs ran toward the tents.

Dark-skinned slaves carried the game, which had been tied in bunches while in the boats, to the white house, where they laid three rows of large water fowl upon the steps leading to the entrance.

Daphne's arrows were supposed to have killed all these, but the master of the hunt had taken care to place among his mistress's booty some of the largest pelicans and vultures which had been shot by the others.

Before retiring to her tent, she inspected the

result of the shooting expedition and was satisfied.

She had been told of the numbers of birds in this archipelago, but the quantity of game which had been killed far exceeded her greatest expectations, and her pleasant blue eyes sparkled with joy as she began to examine the birds which had been slaughtered in so short a time.

Yet, ere she had finished the task, a slight shadow flitted over her well-formed and attractive though not beautiful features.

The odour emanating from so many dead fowls, on which the sun, already high in the heavens, was shining, became disagreeable to her, and a strong sense of discomfort, whose cause, however, she did not seek, made her turn from them.

The movement with which she did so was full of quiet, stately grace, and the admiring glance with which Hermon, a tall, black-bearded young man, watched it, showed that he knew how to value the exquisite symmetry of her figure.

The somewhat full outlines of her form and the self-possession of her bearing would have led every one to think her a young matron rather than a girl; but the two artists who accompanied her on the shooting party had been intimate with

her from childhood, and knew how much modesty and genuine kindness of heart were united with the resolute nature of this maiden, who numbered two and twenty years.

Fair-haired Myrtilus seemed to pay little heed to the game which Gras, Archias's Bithynian house steward, was counting, but black-bearded Hermon had given it more attention, and when Daphne drew back he nodded approvingly, and pointing to the heap of motionless inhabitants of the air, exclaimed with sincere regret: "Fie upon us human wretches! Would the most bloodthirsty hyena destroy such a number of living creatures in a few hours? Other beasts of prey do not kill even one wretched sparrow more than they need to appease their hunger. But we and you, tender-hearted priestess of a gracious goddess—leading us friends of the Muse—we pursue a different course! What a mound of corpses! And what will become of it? Perhaps a few geese and ducks will go into the kitchen; but the rest—the red flamingoes and the brave pelicans who feed their young with their own blood? They are only fit to throw away, for the Biamites eat no game that is shot, and your black slaves, too, would refuse to taste it. So we destroy hundreds of lives for pastime. Base word! As if we had so many superfluous hours at our dis-

posal ere we descend into Hades. A philosopher among brutes would be entitled to cry out, 'Shame upon you, raging monster!'"

"Shame on *you*, you perpetual grumbler," interrupted Daphne in an offended tone. "Who would ever have thought it cruel to test the steady hand and the keen eye upon senseless animals in the joyous chase? But what shall we call the fault-finder, who spoils his friend's innocent enjoyment of a happy morning by his sharp reproaches?"

Hermon shrugged his shoulders, and, in a voice which expressed far more compassion than resentment, answered: "If this pile of dead birds pleases you, go on with the slaughter. You can sometimes save the arrows and catch the swarming game with your hands. If your lifeless victims yonder were human beings, after all, they would have cause to thank you; for what is existence?"

"To these creatures, everything," said Myrtilus, the Alexandrian's other cousin, beckoning to Daphne, who had summoned him to her aid by a beseeching glance, to draw nearer. "Gladly as I would always and everywhere uphold your cause, I can not do so this time. Only look here! Your arrow merely broke the wing of yonder sea eagle, and he is just recovering from

the shock. What a magnificent fellow! How wrathfully and vengefully his eyes sparkle! How fiercely he stretches his brave head toward us in helpless fury, and—step back!—how vigorously, spite of the pain of his poor, wounded, drooping pinion, he flaps the other, and raises his yellow claws to punish his foes! His plumage glistens and shines exquisitely where it lies smooth, and how savagely he puffs out the feathers on his neck! A wonderful spectacle! The embodiment of powerful life! And the others by his side. We transformed the poor creatures into a motionless, miserable mass, and just now they were cleaving the air with their strong wings, proclaiming by proud, glad cries to their families among the reeds their approach with an abundant store of prey. Every one was a feast to the eyes before our arrows struck it, and now? When Hermon, with his pitying heart, condemns this kind of hunting, he is right. It deprives free, harmless creatures of their best possession—life—and us thereby of a pleasant sight. In general, a bird's existence seems to me also of little value, but beauty, to me as to you, transcends everything else. What would existence be without it? and wherever it appears, to injure it is infamous."

Here a slight cough interrupted the young

artist, and the moist glitter of his blue eyes also betrayed that he was suffering from an attack of severe pain in his lungs; but Daphne nodded assent to him, and to Hermon also, and commanded the steward Gras to take the birds out of her sight.

"But," said the Bithynian, "our mistress will doubtless allow us at least to take the hard lower part of the pelicans' beaks, and the wing feathers of the flamingoes and birds of prey, to show our master on our return as trophies."

"Trophies?" repeated the girl scornfully. "Hermon, you are better than I and the rest of us, and I see that you are right. Where game flies toward us in such quantities, hunting becomes almost murder. And successes won by so slight an exertion offer little charm. The second expedition before sunset, Gras, shall be given up. The master of the hounds, with his men and the dogs, will return home on the transports this very day. I am disgusted with sport here. Birds of prey, and those only when brought down from the air, would probably be the right game in this place."

"Those are the very ones to which I would grant life," said Hermon, smiling, "because they enjoy it most."

"Then we will at least save the sea eagle,"

cried Daphne, and ordered the steward, who was already having the dead fowl carried off, to care for the wounded bird of prey; but when the latter struck furiously with his beak at the Biamite who attempted to remove it, Hermon again turned to the girl, saying: "I thank you in the eagle's name for your good will, you best of women; but I fear even the most careful nursing will not help this wounded creature, for the higher one seeks to soar, the more surely he goes to destruction if his power of flight is broken. Mine, too, was seriously injured."

"Here?" asked Daphne anxiously. "At this time, which is of such great importance to you and your art?"

Then she interrupted herself to ask Myrtilus's opinion, but as he had gone away coughing, she continued, in a softer tone: "How anxious you can make one, Hermon! Has anything really happened which clouds your pleasure in creating, and your hope of success?"

"Let us wait," he answered, hastily throwing back his head, with its thick, waving raven locks. "If, in leaping over the ditch, I should fall into the marsh, I must endure it, if thereby I can only reach the shore where my roses bloom!"

"Then you fear that you have failed in the Demeter?" asked Daphne.

"Failed?" repeated the other. "That seems too strong. Only the work is not proving as good as I originally expected. For the head we both used a model—you will see—whose fitness could not be surpassed. But the body! Myrtilus knows how earnestly I laboured, and, without looking to the right or the left, devoted all my powers to the task of creation. True, the models did not remain. But even had a magic spell doubled my ability, the toil would still have been futile. The error is there; yet I am repairing it. To be sure, many things must aid me in doing so, for which I now hope; who knows whether it will not again be in vain? You are acquainted with my past life. It has never yet granted me any great, complete success, and if I was occasionally permitted to pluck a flower, my hands were pricked by thorns and nettles!"

He pursed up his lips as if to hiss the unfriendly fate, and Daphne felt that he, whose career she had watched from childhood with the interest of affection, and to whom, though she did not confess it even to herself, she had clung for years with far more than sisterly love, needed a kind word.

Her heart ached, and it was difficult for her to assume the cheerful tone which she desired to use; but she succeeded, and her voice sounded

gay and careless enough as she exclaimed to the by no means happy artist and Myrtilus, who was just returning: "Give up your foolish opposition, you obstinate men, and let me see what you have accomplished during this long time. You promised my father that you would show your work to no one before him, but believe my words, if he were here he would give you back the pledge and lead me himself to the last production of your study. Compassion would compel you disobliging fellows to yield, if you could only imagine how curiosity tortures us women. We can conquer it where more indifferent matters are concerned. But here!—it need not make you vainer than you already are, but except my father, you are dearest in all the world to me. And then, only listen! In my character as priestess of Demeter I hereby release you from your vow, and thus from any evil consequences of your, moreover, very trivial guilt; for a father and daughter who live together, as I do with your uncle, are just the same as one person. So come! Wearied as I am by the miserable hunting excursion which caused me such vexation, in the presence of your works—rely upon it—I shall instantly be gay again, and all my life will thank you for your noble indulgence."

While speaking, she walked toward the white

house, beckoning to the young men with a winning, encouraging smile.

It seemed to produce the effect intended, for the artists looked at each other irresolutely, and Hermon was already asking himself whether Daphne's arguments had convinced Myrtilus also, when the latter, in great excitement, called after her: "How gladly we would do it, but we must not fulfil your wish, for it was no light promise—no, your father exacted an oath. He alone can absolve us from the obligation of showing him, before any one else, what we finish here. It is not to be submitted to the judges until after he has seen it."

"Listen to me!" Daphne interrupted with urgent warmth, and began to assail the artists with fresh entreaties.

For the second time black-bearded Hermon seemed inclined to give up his resistance, but Myrtilus cried in zealous refusal: "For Hermon's sake, I insist upon my denial. The judges must not talk about the work until both tasks are completed, for then each of us will be as good as certain of a prize. I myself believe that the one for Demeter will fall to me."

"But Hermon will succeed better with the Arachne?" asked Daphne eagerly.

Myrtilus warmly assented, but Hermon ex-

claimed: "If I could only rely upon the good will of the judges!"

"Why not?" the girl interrupted. "My father is just, the king is an incorruptible connoisseur, and certainly yesterday evening you, too, believed the others to be honest men; as for your fellow-candidate Myrtilus, he will no more grudge a prize to you than to himself."

"Why should he?" asked Hermon, as if he, too, was perfectly sure of his friend. "We have shared many a bit of bread together. When we determined upon this competition each knew the other's ability. Your father commissioned us to create peaceful Demeter, the patroness of agriculture, peace, marriage, and Arachne, the mortal who was the most skilful of spinners; for he is both a grain dealer and owner of spinning factories. The best Demeter is to be placed in the Alexandrian temple of the goddess, to whose priestesses you belong; the less successful one in your own house in the city, but whose Demeter is destined for the sanctuary, I repeat, is now virtually decided. Myrtilus will add this prize to the others, and grant me with all his heart the one for the Arachne. The subject, at any rate, is better adapted to my art than to his, and so I should be tolerably certain of my cause. Yet my anxiety about the verdict of the judges re-

mains, for surely you know how much the majority are opposed to my tendency. I, and the few Alexandrians who, following me, sacrifice beauty to truth, swim against the stream which bears you, Myrtilus, and those who are on your side, smoothly along. I know that you do it from thorough conviction, but with other acknowledged great artists and our judges, you, too, demand beauty—always beauty. Am I right, or wrong? Is not any one who refuses to follow in the footsteps left by the ancients of Athens as certain of condemnation as the convicted thief or murderer? But I will not follow the lead of the Athenians, inimitably great though they are in their own way, because I would fain be more than the ancients of Ilissus: a disciple and an Alexandrian."

"The never-ending dispute," Myrtilus answered his fellow-artist, with a cordiality in which, nevertheless, there was a slight accent of pity. "Surely you know it, Daphne. To me the ideal and its embodiment within the limits of the natural, according to the models of Phidias, Polycletus, and Myron is the highest goal, but he and his co-workers seek objects nearer at hand."

"Or rather we found them," cried Hermon, interrupting his companion with angry positiveness. "The city of Alexandria, which is growing

with unprecedented vigour, is their home. There, the place to which every race on earth sends a representative, the pulse of the whole world is throbbing. There, whoever does not run with the rest is run over; there, but one thing is important—actual life. Science has undertaken to fathom it, and the results which it gains with measures and numbers is of a different value and more lasting than that which the idle sport of the intellects of the older philosophers obtained. But art, her nobler sister, must pursue the same paths. To copy life as it is, to reproduce the real as it presents itself, not as it might or must be, is the task which I set myself. If you would have me carve gods, whom man can not represent to himself except in his own form, allow me also to represent them as reality shows me mortals. I will form them after the models of the greatest, highest, and best, and also, when the subject permits, in powerful action in accordance with my own power, but always as real men from head to foot. We must also cling to the old symbols which those who order demand, because they serve as signs of recognition, and *my* Demeter, too, received the bundle of wheat."

As the excited artist uttered this challenge a defiant glance rested upon his comrade and Daphne. But Myrtilus, with a soothing gesture

of the hand, answered: "What is the cause of this heat? I at least watch your work with interest, and do not dispute your art so long as it does not cross the boundaries of the beautiful, which to me are those of art."

Here the conversation was interrupted; the steward Gras brought a letter which a courier from Pelusium had just delivered.

Thyone, the wife of Philippus, the commander of the strong border fortress of Pelusium, near Tennis, had written it. She and her husband had been intimate friends of Hermon's father, who had served under the old general as hipparch, and through him had become well acquainted with his wealthy brother Archias and his relatives.

The Alexandrian merchant had informed Philippus—whom, like all the world, he held in the highest honour as one of the former companions of Alexander the Great—of his daughter's journey, and his wife now announced her visit to Daphne. She expected to reach Tennis that evening with her husband and several friends, and mentioned especially her anticipation of meeting Hermon, the son of her beloved Erigone and her husband's brave companion in arms.

Daphne and Myrtilus received the announcement with pleasure; but Hermon, who only the

day before had spoken of the old couple with great affection, seemed disturbed by the arrival of the unexpected guests. To avoid them entirely appeared impossible even to him, but he declared in an embarrassed tone, and without giving any reason, that he should scarcely be able to devote the entire evening to Daphne and the Pelusinians.

Then he turned quickly toward the house, to which a signal from his slave Bias summoned him.

CHAPTER VI.

As soon as Hermon had disappeared behind the door Daphne begged Myrtilus to accompany her into the tent.

After taking their seats there, the anxious exclamation escaped her lips: "How excited he became again! The stay in Tennis does not seem to agree with you—you are coughing, and father expected so much benefit to your ailment from the pure moist air, and to Hermon still more from the lonely life here in your society. But I have rarely seen him more strongly enlisted in behalf of the tendency opposed to beauty."

"Then your father must be satisfied with the good effect which our residence here has exerted upon *me*," replied Myrtilus. "I know that he was thinking of my illness when he proposed to us to complete his commissions here. Hermon —the good fellow!—could never have been induced to leave his Alexandria, had not the hope of thereby doing me a kindness induced him to follow me. I will add it to the many for which

I am already indebted to his friendship. As for art, he will go his own way, and any opposition would be futile. A goddess—he perceives it himself—was certainly the most unfortunate subject possible for his——"

"Is his Demeter a complete failure?" asked Daphne anxiously.

"Certainly not," replied Myrtilus eagerly. "The head is even one of his very best. Only the figure awakens grave doubts. In the effort to be faithful to reality, the fear of making concessions to beauty, he lapsed into ungraceful angularity and a sturdiness which, in my opinion, would be unpleasing even in a mortal woman. The excess of unbridled power again makes itself visible in the wonderfully gifted man. Many things reached him too late, and others too soon."

Daphne eagerly asked what he meant by these words, and Myrtilus replied: "Surely you know how he became a sculptor. Your father had intended him to be his successor in business, but Hermon felt the vocation to become an artist—probably first in my studio—awake with intense force. While I early placed myself under the instruction of the great Bryaxis, he was being trained for a merchant's life. When he was to guide the reed in the countinghouse,

he sketched; when he was sent to the harbour to direct the loading of the ships, he became absorbed in gazing at the statues placed there. In the warehouse he secretly modelled, instead of attending to the bales of goods. You are certainly aware what a sad breach occurred then, and how long Hermon was restrained before he succeeded in turning his back upon trade."

"My father meant so kindly toward him," Daphne protested. "He was appointed guardian to you both. You are rich, and therefore he aided in every possible way your taste for art; but Hermon did not inherit from his parents a single drachm, and so my father saw the most serious struggles awaiting him if he devoted himself to scupture. And, besides, he had destined his nephew to become his successor, the head of one of the largest commercial houses in the city."

"And in doing so," Myrtilus responded, "he believed he had made the best provision for his happiness. But there is something peculiar in art. I know from your father himself how kind his intentions were when he withdrew his assistance from Hermon, and when he had escaped to the island of Rhodes, left him to make his own way during the first period of apprenticeship through which he passed there. Necessity, he

thought, would bring him back to where he had a life free from anxiety awaiting him. But the result was different. Far be it from me to blame the admirable Archias, yet had he permitted his ward to follow his true vocation earlier, it would have been better for him."

"Then you think that he began to study too late?" asked Daphne eagerly.

"Not too late," was the reply, "but with his passionate struggle to advance, an earlier commencement would have been more favourable. While the companions of his own age were already doing independent work, he was still a student, and so it happened that he began for himself too soon."

"Yet," Daphne answered, "can you deny that, directly after Hermon produced his first work which made his talent undeniable, my father again treated him like his own son?"

"On the contrary," replied Myrtilus, "I remember only too well how Archias at that time, probably not entirely without your intercession, fairly showered gold upon his nephew, but unfortunately this abundance was by no means to his advantage."

"What do you mean?" asked Daphne. "Were not you, at that very time, in full possession of the great wealth inherited from your

father and mother, and yet did you not work far beyond your strength? Bryaxis—I heard him—was full of your praises, and yet entreated my father to use all his influence, as guardian, to warn you against overwork."

"My kind master!" cried Myrtilus, deeply moved. "He was as anxious about me as a father."

"Because he perceived that you were destined for great achievements."

"And because it did not escape his penetration how much I needed care. My lungs, Daphne, my lungs—surely you know how the malicious disease became fatal to my dear mother, and to my brother and sister also. All three sank prematurely into the grave, and for years the shades of my parents have been beckoning to me too. When the cough shakes my chest, I see Charon raise his oar and invite me also to enter his sable boat."

"But you just assured me that you were doing well," observed the girl. "The cough alone makes me a little anxious. If you could only see for yourself what a beautiful colour the pure air has given your cheeks!"

"This flush," replied Myrtilus gravely, "is the sunset of life's closing day, not the dawn of approaching convalescence. But let us drop the

subject. I allude to these sorrowful things only to prevent your praises of me at Hermon's expense. True, even while a student I possessed wealth far beyond my needs, but the early deaths of my brother and sister had taught me even then to be economical of the brief span of life allotted to me. Hermon, on the contrary, was overflowing with manly vigour, and the strongest among the Ephebi in the wrestling school. After three nights' revel he would not even feel weary, and how difficult the women made it for the handsome, black-bearded fellow to commence his work early! Did you ever ask yourself why young steeds are not broken in flowery meadows, but upon sand? Nothing which attracts their attention and awakens their desires must surround them; but your father's gold led Hermon, ere the season of apprenticeship was over, into the most luxuriant clover fields. Honour and respect the handsome, hot-blooded youth that, nevertheless, he allowed himself to be diverted from work only a short time and soon resumed it with ardent zeal, at first in superabundance, and then amid fresh need and privation."

"O Myrtilus," the girl interrupted, "how terribly I suffered in those days! For the first time the gods made me experience that there are black clouds, as well as bright sunshine, in

the human soul. For weeks an impassable gulf separated me from my father, with whom I had always had one heart and soul. But I never saw him as he was then. The first prize had been awarded to you for your Aphrodite, radiant in marvellous beauty, and your brow had also been already crowned for your statue of Alexander, when Hermon stepped forward with his works. They were at the same time the first which were to show what he believed to be the true mission of art—a hideous hawker, hide in hand, praising his wares with open mouth, and the struggling Mænads. Surely you know the horrible women who throw one another on the ground, tearing and rending with bestial fury. The spectacle of these fruits of the industry of one dear to me grieved me also, and I could not understand how you and the others saw anything to admire in them. And my father! At the sight of these things the colour faded from his cheeks and lips, and, as if by virtue of his guardianship he had a right to direct Hermon in the paths of art also, he forbade his ward to waste any more time in such horrible scarecrows, and awaken loathing and wrath instead of gratification, exultation, and joy. You know the consequences, but you do not know how my heart ached when Hermon, frantic with wounded pride and indignation,

turned his back upon my father and severed every tie that united him to us. In spite of his deep vexation and the unbridled violence with which the nephew had allowed himself to address his uncle, my father did not dream of withholding his assistance from him. But Hermon no longer came to our house, and when I sent for him to bring him to reason, he positively declared that he would not accept another obolus from my father—he would rather starve than permit any one to dictate to him in the choice of his subjects. Liberty was worth more than his uncle's gold. Yet my father sent him his annual allowance."

"But he refused it," added Myrtilus. "I remember that day well, how I tried to persuade him, and, when he persisted in his intention, besought him to accept from my abundance what he needed. But this, too, he resolutely refused, though at that time I was already so deeply in his debt that I could not repay him at all with paltry money."

"You are thinking of the devotion with which he nursed you when you were so ill?" asked Daphne.

"Certainly; yet not of that alone," was the reply. "You do not know how he stood by me in the worst days. Who was it that after my

first great successes, when base envy clouded many an hour of my life, rejoiced with me as though he himself had won the laurel? It was he, the ambitious artist, though recognition held even farther aloof from his creations than success. And when, just at that time, the insidious disease attacked me more cruelly than ever, he devoted himself to me like a loving brother. While formerly, in the overflowing joy of existence, he had revelled all day and caroused all night, how often he paused in the rush of gaiety to exchange the festal hall for a place beside my couch, frequently remaining there until Eos dyed the east, that he might hold my fevered hand and support my shaken frame! Frequently too, when already garlanded for some gay banquet, he took the flowers from his head and devoted the night to his friend, that he might not leave him to the attendance of the slaves. It is owing to him, and the care and skill of the great leech Erasistratus, that I am still standing before you alive and can praise what my Hermon was and proved himself to me in those days. Yet I must also accuse him of a wrong; to this hour I bear him a grudge for having, in those sorrowful hours, refused to share my property with me fraternally. What manly pride would have cheerfully permitted him to accept was opposed

by the defiant desire to show me, your father, you, the whole world, that he would depend upon himself, and needed assistance neither from human beings nor even the gods. In the same way, while working, he obstinately rejected my counsel and my help, though the Muse grants me some things which he unfortunately lacks. Great as his talent is, firmly as I believe that he will yet succeed some day in creating something grand, nay, perhaps something mighty, the unbelieving disciple of Straton lacks the power of comprehending the august dignity, the superhuman majesty of the divine nature, and he does not succeed in representing the bewitching charm of woman, because he hates it as the bull hates a red rag. Only once hitherto has he been successful, and that was with your bust."

Daphne's cheeks suddenly flamed with a burning flush, and feeling it she raised her feather fan to her eyes, and with forced indifference murmured: "We were good friends from our earliest childhood. And, besides, how small is the charm with which the artist who chooses me for a model has to deal!"

"It is rather an unusually fascinating one," Myrtilus asserted resolutely. "I have no idea of flattering you, and you are certainly aware that I do not number you among the beauties of Al-

exandria. But instead of the delicate, symmetrical features which artists need, the gods bestowed upon you a face which wins all hearts, even those of women, because it is a mirror of genuine, helpful, womanly kindness, a sincere disposition, and a healthy, receptive mind. To reproduce such a face, not exactly beautiful, and yet bewitching, is the hardest possible task, and Hermon, I repeat it, has succeeded. You are the only one of your noble sex who inspires the motherless man with respect, and for whom he feels more than a fleeting fancy. What does he not owe you? After the bridge which united him to his uncle and paternal friend had been so suddenly broken, it was you who rebuilt it. Now, I think, it is stronger than ever. I could not imagine anything that would induce him to give you up; and all honour to your father, who, instead of bearing the insubordinate fellow a grudge, only drew him more warmly to his heart, and gave us two commissions which will permit each to do his best. If I see clearly, the daughter of Archias is closely connected with this admirable deed."

"Of course," replied Daphne, "my father discussed his intention with me, but the thought was entirely his own. True, Hermon's Street-Boy eating Figs was not exactly according to his

taste, but it pleased him better than his former works, and I agree with Euphranor, it is remarkably true to nature. My father perceived this too. Besides, he is a merchant who sets a high value upon what he has earned, and Hermon's refusal of his gold startled him. Then the good man also saw how nobly, in spite of his wild life, his obstinacy, and the work so unpleasing to him, his nephew always showed the noble impulses inherited from his brave father, and thus Hermon gained the day."

"But what would have become of him last year, after the mortifying rejection of his model of The Happy Return Home for the harbour of Eunostus," asked Myrtilus, "if you and your encouragement had not cheered him?"

"That verdict, too, was abominable!" exclaimed Daphne indignantly. "The mother opening her arms to the returning son was unlovely, it is true, and did not please me either; but the youth with the travelling hat and staff is magnificent in his vigour and natural action."

"That opinion, as you know, is mine also," replied Myrtilus. "In the mother the expression was intended to take the place of beauty. For the returning son, as well as for the fig-eater, he found a suitable model. True, the best was at his disposal for his Demeter."

Here he hesitated; but Daphne so urgently asked to know what he, who had already denied her admission to the studios, was now again withholding from her, that, smiling indulgently, he added: "Then I must probably consent to tell in advance the secret with which you were to be surprised. Before him, as well as before me, hovered—since you wish to know it—in Alexandria, when we first began to model the head of the goddess, a certain charming face which is as dear to one as to the other."

Daphne, joyously excited, held out her hand to the artist, exclaiming: "Oh, how kind that is! Yet how was it possible, since I posed neither to him nor to you?"

"Hermon had finished your bust only a short time before, and you permitted me to use your head for my statue of the goddess of Peace, which went down with the ship on the voyage to Ostia. This was at the disposal of us both in three or four reproductions, and, besides, it hovered before our mental vision clearly enough. When the time to show you our work arrives, you will be surprised to discover how differently two persons see and copy the same object."

"Now that I know so much, and have a certain share in your works, I insist upon seeing them!" cried Daphne with far greater impetu-

osity than usual. "Tell Hermon so, and remind him that I shall at any rate expect him to meet the Pelusinian guests at the banquet. Threaten him seriously with my grave displeasure if he persists in leaving it speedily."

"I will not fail to do my part," replied Myrtilus; "but as to your wish to see the two Demeters——"

"That will come to pass," interrupted Daphne, "as soon as we three are together again like a clover leaf." She returned the sculptor's farewell greeting as she spoke, but before he reached the entrance to the tent she again detained him with the exclamation: "Only this one thing more: Does Hermon deceive himself when he hopes so confidently for success with the weaver, Arachne?"

"Hardly—if the model whom he desires does not fail him."

"Is she beautiful, and did he find her here in Tennis?" asked Daphne, trying to assume an indifferent manner; but Myrtilus was not deceived, and answered gaily: "That's the way people question children to find out things. Farewell until the banquet, fair curiosity!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE slave Bias had not gone to the hunting party with his master. He had never been fit for such expeditions, since the Egyptian guard who took him to the slave market for sale crippled the arch-traitor's son's left leg by a blow, but he was all the more useful in the house, and even the keenest eye could scarcely now perceive the injury which lessened his commercial value.

He had prepared everything his master would need to shoot the birds very early in the morning, and after helping the men push the boats into the water, he, too, remained out of doors.

The old Nubian doorkeeper's little badger dog ran to meet him, as usual, barking loudly, and startled a flock of sparrows, which flew up directly in front of Bias and fluttered to and fro in confusion.

The slave regarded this as an infallible omen, and when Stephanion, Daphne's maid, who had grown gray in the household of Archias, and though a freed woman still worked in the old

way, came out of the tent, he called to her the gay Greek greeting, "Rejoice!" pointed to the sparrows, and eagerly continued: "How one flies above another! how they flutter and chirp and twitter! It will be a busy day."

Stephanion thought this interpretation of the ordinary action of the birds very consistent with Bias's wisdom, which was highly esteemed in the household of Archias, and it also just suited her inclination to chat with him for a while, especially as she had brought a great deal of news from Alexandria.

By way of introduction she mentioned the marriages and deaths in their circle of acquaintances, bond and free, and then confided to the slave what had induced her mistress to remain so long absent from her father, whom she usually left alone for only a few hours at the utmost.

Archias himself had sent her here, after young Philotas, who was now apparently wooing her with better success than other suitors, had spoken of the enormous booty which one of his friends had brought from a shooting expedition at Tennis, and Daphne had expressed a wish to empty her quiver there too.

True, Philotas himself had been eager to guide the hunting party, but Daphne declined his escort because—so the maid asserted—she

cared far more about meeting her cousins, the sculptors, than for the chase. Her mistress had frankly told her so, but her father was delighted to hear her express a wish, because for several months she had been so quiet and listless that she, Stephanion, had become anxious about her. Meanwhile, Daphne had tried honestly to conceal her feelings from the old man, but such games of hide and seek were useless against the master's keen penetration. He spared no pains in the preparations for the journey, and the girl now seemed already transformed. This was caused solely by meeting her cousins again; but if any one should ask her whether Daphne preferred Myrtilus or Hermon, she could not give a positive answer.

"Cautious inquiry saves recantation," replied Bias importantly. "Yet you may believe my experience, it is Myrtilus. Fame inspires love, and what the world will not grant my master, in spite of his great talent, it conceded to the other long ago. And, besides, we are not starving; but Myrtilus is as rich as King Crœsus of Sardis. Not that Daphne, who is stifling in gold herself, would care about that, but whoever knows life knows—where doves are, doves will fly."

Stephanion, however, was of a different opin-

ion, not only because Daphne talked far more about the black-bearded cousin than the fair one, but because she knew the girl, and was seldom mistaken in such matters. She would not deny that Daphne was also fond of Myrtilus. Yet probably neither of the artists, but Philotas, would lead home the bride, for he was related to the royal family—a fine, handsome man; and, besides, her father preferred him to the other suitors who hovered around her as flies buzzed about honey. Of course, matters would be more favourable to Philotas in any other household. Who else in Alexandria would consult the daughter long, when he was choosing her future husband? But Archias was a white raven among fathers, and would never force his only child to do anything.

Marrying and loving, however, were two different affairs. If Eros had the final decision, her choice might perhaps fall on one of the artists.

Here she was interrupted by the slave's indignant exclamation: "What contradictions! 'Woman's hair is long, but her wit is short,' says the proverb. 'Waiting is the merchant's wisdom,' I have heard your master say more than once, and to obey the words of shrewd people is the best plan for those who are not so wise. Meanwhile, I am of the opinion that curiosity

alone brought Daphne—who, after all, is only a woman—to this place. She wants to see the statues of Demeter which her father ordered from us."

"And the Arachne?" asked the maid.

This was an opportune question to the slave—how often he had heard the artists utter the word "Arachne!"—and his pride of education had suffered from the consciousness that he knew nothing about her except the name, which in Greek meant "the spider."

Some special story must surely be associated with this Arachne, for which his master desired to use his young countrywoman, Ledscha, as a model, and whose statues Archias intended to place in his house in Alexandria and in the great weaving establishment at Tennis beside the statue of Demeter.

Stephanion, a Greek woman who grew up in a Macedonian household, must know something about her.

So he cautiously turned the conversation to the spinner Arachne, and when Stephanion entered into it, admitted that he, too, was curious to learn in what way the sculptors would represent her.

"Yes," replied the maid, "my mistress has more than once racked her brains over that, and

Archias too. Perhaps they will carve her as a girl at work in the house of her father Idmon, the purple dyer of Colophon."

"Never," replied Bias in a tone of dissent. "Just imagine how the loom would look wrought in gold and ivory!"

"I thought so too," said Stephanion, in apology for the foolish idea. "Daphne thinks that the two will model her in different ways: Myrtilus, as mistress in the weaving room, showing with proud delight a piece just completed to the nymphs from the Pactolus and other rivers, who sought her at Colophon to admire her work; but Hermon, after she aroused the wrath of Athene because she dared to weave into the hangings the love adventures of the gods with mortal women."

"Father Zeus as a swan toying with Leda," replied Bias as confidently as if Arachne's works were before his eyes, "and in the form of a bull bearing away Europa, the chaste Artemis bending over the sleeping Endymion."

"How that pleases you men!" interrupted the maid, striking him lightly on the arm with the duster which she had brought from the tent. "But ought the virgin Athene to be blamed because she punished the weaver who, with all her skill, was only a mortal woman, for thus exposing her divine kindred?"

"Certainly not," replied Bias, and Stephanion went on eagerly: "And when the great Athene, who invented weaving and protects weavers, condescended to compete with Arachne, and was excelled by her, surely her gall must have overflowed. Whoever is just will scarcely blame her for striking the audacious conqueror on the brow with the weaver's shuttle."

"It is that very thing," replied Bias modestly, "which to a short-sighted fool like myself —may the great goddess not bear me a grudge for it!—never seemed just in her. Even the mortal who succumbs in a fair fight ought not to be enraged against the victor. At least, so I was taught. But what, I ask myself, when I think of the stones which were flung at Hermon's struggling Mænads, could be less suited for imitation than two women, one of whom strikes the other?"

"The woman who in her desperation at that blow desires to hang herself, must produce a still more horrible impression," replied Stephanion. "Probably she will be represented as Athene releases her from the noose rather than when, as a punishment for her insolence, she transforms Arachne into a spider."

"That she might be permitted, in the form of an insect, to make artistic webs until the end

of her life," the slave, now sufficiently well informed, added importantly. "Since that transformation, as you know, the spider has been called by the Greeks Arachne. Perhaps—I always thought so—Hermon will represent her twisting the rope with which she is to kill herself. You have seen many of our works, and know that we love the terrible."

"Oh, let me go into your studio!" the maid now entreated no less urgently than her mistress had done a short time before, but her wish, too, remained ungratified.

"The sculptors," Bias truthfully asserted, "always kept their workrooms carefully locked. They were as inaccessible as the strongest fortress, and it was wise, less on account of curious spectators, from whom there was nothing to fear, than of the thievish propensities of the people. The statues, by Archias's orders, were to be executed in chryselephantine work, and the gold and ivory which this required might only too easily awaken the vice of cupidity in the honest and frugal Biamites. So nothing could be done about it, not to mention the fact that he was forbidden, on pain of being sold to work in a stone quarry, to open the studio to any one without his master's consent.

So the maid, too, was obliged to submit, and

the sacrifice was rendered easier for her because, just at that moment, a young female slave called her back to the tent where Chrysilla, Daphne's companion, a matron who belonged to a distinguished Greek family, needed her services.

Bias, rejoicing that he had at last learned, without exposing his own ignorance, the story of the much-discussed Arachne, returned to the house, where he remained until Daphne came back from shooting with her companions.

While the latter were talking about the birds they had killed, Bias went out of doors; but he was forced to give up his desire to listen to a conversation which was exactly suited to arrest his attention, for after the first few sentences he perceived behind the thorny acacias in the "garden" his countrywoman Ledscha.

So she was keeping her promise. He recognised her plainly, in spite of the veil which covered the back of her head and the lower portion of her face. Her black eyes were visible, and what a sinister light shone in them as she fixed them sometimes on Daphne, sometimes on Hermon, who stood talking together by the steps!

The evening before Bias had caught a glimpse of this passionate creature's agitated soul. If anything happened here that incensed or wounded her she would be capable of committing some

unprecedented act before the very eyes of his master's honoured guest.

To prevent this was a duty to the master whom he loved, and against whom he had only warned Ledscha because he was reluctant to see a free maiden of his own race placed on a level with the venal Alexandrian models, but still more because any serious love affair between Hermon and the Bianite might bring disastrous consequences upon both, and therefore also on himself. He knew that the free men of his little nation would not suffer an insult offered by a Greek to a virgin daughter of their lineage to pass unavenged.

True, in his bondage he had by no means remained free from all the bad qualities of slaves, but he was faithfully devoted to his master, who had imposed upon him a great debt of gratitude; for though, during the trying period of variance with his rich and generous uncle, Hermon had often been offered so large a sum for him that it would have relieved the artist from want, he could not be induced to yield his "wise and faithful Bias" to another. The slave had sworn to himself that he would never forget this, and he kept his oath.

Freedmen and slaves were moving to and fro in the large open square before him, amid the

barking of the dogs and the shouts of the male and female venders of fruit, vegetables, and fish, who hoped to dispose of their wares in the kitchen tent of the wealthy strangers.

The single veiled woman attracted no attention here, but Bias kept his gaze fixed steadily upon her, and as she curved her little slender hand above her brow to shade her watchful eyes from the dazzling sunlight, and set her beautifully arched foot on a stone near one of the trees in order to gain a better view, he thought of the story of the weaver which he had just heard.

Though the stillness of the hot noontide was interrupted by many sounds, it exerted a bewitching influence over him.

Ledscha seemed like the embodiment of some great danger, and when she lowered one arm and raised the other to protect herself again from the radiance of the noonday sun, he started; for through the brain of the usually fearless man darted the thought that now the nimble spider-legs were moving to draw him toward her, entwine him, and suck his heart's blood.

The illusion lasted only a few brief moments, but when it vanished and the girl had regained the figure of an unusually slender, veiled Biamite woman, he shook his head with a sigh of relief, for never had such a vision appeared to

him in broad noonday and while awake, and it must have been sent to warn him and his master against this uncanny maiden.

It positively announced some approaching misfortune which proceeded from this beautiful creature.

The Biamite now advanced hesitatingly toward Hermon and Daphne, who were still a considerable distance from her. But Bias had also quitted his post of observation, and after she had taken a few steps forward, barred her way.

With a curt "Come," he took her hand, whispering, "Hermon is joyously expecting your visit."

Ledscha's veil concealed her mouth, but the expression of her eyes made him think that it curled scornfully.

Yet she silently followed him.

At first he led her by the hand, but on the way he saw at the edge of her upper veil the thick, dark eyebrows which met each other, and her fingers seemed to him so strangely cold and tapering that a shudder ran through his frame and he released them.

Ledscha scarcely seemed to notice it, and, with bowed head, walked beside him through the side entrance to the door of Hermon's studio.

It was a disappointment to her to find it

locked, but Bias did not heed her angry complaint, and led her into the artist's sitting room, requesting her to wait for his master there.

Then he hurried to the steps, and by a significant sign informed the sculptor that something important required his attention.

Hermon understood him, and Bias soon had an opportunity to tell the artist who it was that desired to speak to him and where he had taken Ledscha. He also made him aware that he feared some evil from her, and that, in an alarming vision, she had appeared to him as a hideous spider.

Hermon laughed softly. "As a spider? The omen is appropriate. We will make her a woman spider—an Arachne that is worth looking at. But this strange beauty is one of the most obstinate of her sex, and if I let her carry out her bold visit in broad daylight she will get the better of me completely. The blood must first be washed from my hands here. The wounded sea eagle tore the skin with its claw, and I concealed the scratch from Daphne. A strip of linen to bandage it! Meanwhile, let the impatient intruder learn that her sign is not enough to open every door."

Then he entered his sitting room, greeted Ledscha curtly, invited her to go into the studio,

unlocked it, and left her there alone while he went to his chamber with the slave and had the slight wound bandaged comfortably.

While Bias was helping his master he repeated with sincere anxiety his warning against the dangerous beauty whose eyebrows, which had grown together, proved that she was possessed by the demons of the nether world.

"Yet they increase the austere beauty of her face," assented the artist. "I should not want to omit them in modelling Arachne while the goddess is transforming her into a spider! What a subject! A bolder one was scarcely ever attempted and, like you, I already see before me the coming spider."

Then, without the slightest haste, he exchanged the huntsman's chiton for the white chlamys, which was extremely becoming to his long, waving beard, and at last, exclaiming gaily, "If I stay any longer, she will transform herself into empty air instead of the spider," he went to her.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHILE waiting in the studio Ledscha had used the time to satisfy her curiosity.

What was there not to be seen!

On pedestals and upon the boards of the floor, on boxes, racks, and along the wall, stood, lay, or hung the greatest variety of articles: plaster casts of human limbs and parts of the bodies of animals, male and female, of clay and wax, withered garlands, all sorts of sculptor's tools, a ladder, vases, cups and jars for wine and water, a frame over which linen and soft woollen materials were spread, a lute and a zither, several seats, an armchair, and in one corner a small table with three dilapidated book rolls, writing tablets, metal styluses, and reed pens.

All these articles were arranged haphazard, and showed that Bias possessed more wisdom than care in the use of duster and broom.

It would have been difficult to count the number of things brought together here, but the unusually long, wide room was by no means crowded.

Ledscha cast a wondering glance sometimes at one object, sometimes at another, but without understanding its meaning or its use.

The huge figure on the pedestal in the middle of the studio, upon which the full glare of light fell through the open windows, was certainly the statue of the goddess on which Hermon was working; but a large gray cloth concealed it from her gaze.

How tall it was!

When she looked at it more closely she felt small and oppressed by comparison.

A passionate longing urged her to remove the cloth, but the boldness of the act restrained her.

After she had taken another survey of the spacious apartment, which she was visiting for the first time by daylight, the torturing feeling of being neglected gained possession of her.

She clinched her white teeth more firmly, and when there was a noise at the door that died away again without bringing the man she expected, she went up to the statue which she had already walked past quietly several times and, obeying an impatient impulse, freed it from its covering.

The goddess, now illumined by the sunlight, shone before her in gleaming yellow gold and snowy ivory.

She had never seen such a statue, and drew back dazzled.

What a master was the man who had deceived her trusting heart!

He had created a Demeter; the wheat in her hand showed it.

How beautiful this work was—and how valuable! It produced a powerful impression upon her mind, wholly unaccustomed to the estimate of such things.

The goddess before her was the very one whose statue stood in the temple of Demeter, and to whom she also sacrificed, with the Greeks in Tennis, when danger threatened the harvest. Involuntarily she removed the lower veil from her face and raised her hand in prayer.

Meanwhile she gazed into the pallid face, carved from ivory, of the immortal dispenser of blessings, and suddenly the blood crimsoned her cheeks, the nostrils of her delicate, slightly arched nose rose and fell more swiftly, for the countenance of the goddess—she was not mistaken—was that of the Alexandrian whom she had just watched so intently, and for whose sake Hermon had left her in the lurch the evening before.

Now, too, she remembered for what purpose the sculptor was said to have lured Gula, the sailor's wife, and her own young sister Taus, to

his studio, and in increasing excitement she drew the cloth also from the bust beside the Demeter.

Again the Alexandrian's face—the likeness was even more unmistakable than in the goddess.

The Greek girl alone occupied his thoughts. Hermon had disdained to model the Biamite's head.

What could the others, or she herself, be to him, since he loved the rich foreigner in the tent outside, and her alone? How firmly her image must have been impressed upon his soul, that he could reproduce the features of the absent one with such lifelike fidelity!

Yet with what bold assurance he had protested that his heart belonged solely to her. But she thought that she now perceived his purpose. If the slave was right, it was done that she might permit him to model what he admired in her figure, only not the head and face, whose beauty, nevertheless, he praised so extravagantly.

Had he attracted Gula and her sister with similar sweet flatteries? Had the promise to bestow their charms upon a goddess been made to them also?

The swift throbbing of her indignant heart made it impossible for her to think calmly, but

its vehement pulsation reminded her of the object of her presence here.

She had come to obtain a clear understanding between him and herself.

She stood here as a judge.

She must know whether she had been betrayed or deceived.

He should confess what his intentions toward her were. The next moments must decide the fate of her life, and she added, drawing a long breath, perhaps of his also.

Suddenly Ledscha started. She had not heard Hermon enter the studio, and was now startled by his greeting.

It was not positively unkind, but certainly not a lover's.

Perhaps the words might have been warmer, but for his annoyance at the insolent boldness with which she had removed the coverings from his works. He restrained himself from openly blaming her, it is true, but he exclaimed, with a tinge of gay sarcasm: "You seem to feel very much at home here already, fairest of the fair. Or was it the goddess herself who removed the curtain from her image in order to show herself to her successor upon this pedestal?"

But the question was to remain unanswered, for under the spell of the resentment which filled

her heart, and in the effort not to lose sight of the object that brought her here, Ledscha had only half understood its meaning, and pointing her slender forefinger at the face of his completed work, she demanded to know whom she recognised in this statue.

"The goddess Demeter," he answered quietly; "but if it pleases you better, as you seem to be on the right track, also the daughter of Archias."

Then, angered by the wrathful glance she cast at him, he added more sternly: "She is kind-hearted, free from disagreeable whims and the disposition to torture others who are kindly disposed toward her. So I adorned the goddess with her pleasant features."

"Mine, you mean to say," Ledscha answered bitterly, "would be less suitable for this purpose. Yet they, too, can wear a different expression from the present one. You, I think, have learned this. Only I shall never acquire the art of dissimulation, not even in *your* society."

"You seem to be angry on account of my absence yesterday evening?" Hermon asked in an altered tone, clasping her hand; but Ledscha snatched it from him, exclaiming: "The model of the Demeter, the daughter of the wealthy Archias, detained you, you were going to tell

me, and you think that ought to satisfy the barbarian maiden."

"Folly!" he answered angrily. "I owe a debt of gratitude to her father, who was my guardian, and custom commands you also to honour a guest. But your obstinacy and jealousy are unbearable. What great thing is it that I ask of your love? A little patience. Practise it. Then your turn will come too."

"Of course, the second and third will follow the first," she answered bitterly. "After Gula, the sailor's wife, you lured my innocent young sister, Taus, to this apartment; or am I mistaken in the order, and was Gula the second?"

"So that's it!" cried Hermon, who was surprised rather than alarmed by this betrayal of his secret. "If you want confirmation of the fact, very well—both were here."

"Because you deluded them with false vows of love."

"By no means. My heart has nothing whatever to do with these visits. Gula came to thank me because I rendered her a service—you know it—which to every mother seems greater than it is."

"But you certainly did not underestimate it," Ledscha impetuously interrupted, "for you demanded her honour in return."

"Guard your tongue!" the artist burst forth angrily. "The woman visited me unasked, and I let her leave me as faithful or as unfaithful to her husband as she came. If I used her as a model——"

"Gula, whom the sculptor transforms into a goddess," Ledscha interrupted, with a sneering laugh.

"Into a fish-seller, if you wish to know it," cried Hermon indignantly. "I saw in the market a young woman selling shad. I took the subject, and found in Gula a suitable model. Unfortunately, she ventured here far too seldom. But I can finish it with the help of the sketch—it stands in yonder cupboard."

"A fish-seller," Ledscha repeated contemptuously. "And for what did my Taus, poor lovely child, seem desirable?"

"Over opposite," Hermon answered quickly, as if he wished to get rid of a troublesome duty, pointing through the window out of doors, "the free maidens, during the hot days, took off their sandals and waded through the water. There I saw your sister's feet. They were the prettiest of all, and Gula brought the young girl to me. I had commenced in Alexandria a figure of a girl holding her foot in her hand to take out a thorn, so I used your sister's for it."

"And when my turn comes?" Ledscha demanded.

"Then," he replied, freshly captivated by the magic of her beauty, in a kinder, almost tender tone, "then I will make of you, in gold and ivory, you wonderfully lovely creature, the counterpart of this goddess."

"And you will need a long time for it?"

"The oftener you come the faster the work will advance."

"And the more surely the Biamite women will point their fingers at me."

"Yet you ventured here to-day, unasked, in the broad light of noon."

"Because I wish to remind you myself that I shall expect you this evening. Yesterday you did not appear; but to-day—I am right, am I not?—to-day you will come."

"With the greatest delight, if it is possible," he answered eagerly.

A warmer glance from her dark eyes rested upon him. The blood seethed in his veins, and as he extended both hands to her and ardently uttered her name, she rushed forward, clinging to him with passionate devotion, as if seeking assistance, but when his lips touched hers she shrank back and loosed her soft arms from his neck.

"What does this mean?" asked the sculptor in surprise, trying to draw her toward him again; but Ledscha would not permit it, pleading in a softer tone than before: "Not now; but—am I not right, dearest—I may expect you this evening? Just this once let the daughter of Archias yield to me, who loves you better. We shall have a full moon to-night, and you have heard what was predicted to me—to-night the highest bliss which the gods can bestow upon a mortal awaits me."

"And me also," cried Hermon, "if you will permit me to share it with you."

"Then I will expect you on the Pelican Island —just when the full moon is over the lofty poplars there. You will come? Not to the Owl's Nest: to the Pelican Island. And though your love is far less, far cooler than mine, yet you will not defraud me of the best happiness of my life?"

"How could I?" he asked, as if he felt wounded by such distrust. "What detains me must be something absolutely unavoidable."

Ledscha's eyebrows contracted sharply, and in a choked voice she exclaimed: "Nothing must detain you—nothing, whatever it may be! Though death should threaten, you will be with me just at midnight."

"I will, if it is possible," he protested, painfully touched by the vehemence of her urging. "What can be more welcome to me also than to spend happy hours with you in the silence of a moonlight night? Besides, my stay in Tennis will not be long."

"You are going?" she asked in a hollow tone.

"In three or four days," he answered carelessly; "then Myrtilus and I will be expected in Alexandria. But gently—gently—how pale you are, girl! Yes, the parting! But in six weeks at latest I shall be here again; then real life will first begin, and Eros will make the roses bloom for us."

Ledscha nodded silently, and gazing into his face with a searching look asked, "And how long will this season of blossoming last?"

"Several months, girl; three, if not six."

"And then?"

"Who looks so far into the future?"

She lowered her glance, and, as if yielding to the inevitable, answered: "What a fool I was! Who knows what the morrow may bring? Are we even sure whether, six months hence, we shall not hate, instead of loving, each other?"

She passed her hand across her brow as she

spoke, exclaiming: "You said just now that only the present belonged to man. Then let us enjoy it as though every moment might be the last. By the light of the full moon to-night, the happiness which has been predicted to me must begin. After it, the orb between the horns of Astarte will become smaller; but when it fulls and wanes again, if you keep your promise and return, then, though they may curse and condemn me, I will come to your studio and grant what you ask. But which of the goddesses do you intend to model from me as a companion statue to the Demeter?"

"This time it can not be one of the immortelles," he answered hesitatingly, "but a famous woman, an artist who succeeded in a competition in vanquishing even the august Athene."

"So it is no goddess?" Ledscha asked in a disappointed tone.

"No, child, but the most skilful woman who ever plied the weaver's shuttle."

"And her name?"

"Arachne."

The young girl started, exclaiming contemptuously: "Arachne? That is—that is what you Greeks call the most repulsive of creatures—the spider."

"The most skilful of all creatures, that taught

man the noble art of weaving," he eagerly retorted.

Here he was interrupted; his friend Myrtilus put his fair head into the room, exclaiming: "Pardon me if I interrupt you—but we shall not see each other again for some time. I have important business in the city, and may be detained a long while. Yet before I go I must perform the commission Daphne gave me for you. She sends word that she shall expect you without fail at the banquet for the Pelusinian guests. Your absence, do you hear?—pardon the interruption, fairest Ledscha—your absence would seriously anger her."

"Then I shall be prepared for considerable trouble in appeasing her," replied Hermon, glancing significantly at the young girl.

Myrtilus crossed the threshold, turned to the Biamite, and said in his quiet, cheerful manner: "Where beautiful gifts are to be brought to Eros, it beseems the friend to strew with flowers the path of the one who is offering the sacrifices; and you, if everything does not deceive me, would fain choose to-night to serve him with the utmost devotion. Therefore, I shall need forgiveness from you and the god, if I beseech you to defer the offering, were it only until to-morrow."

Ledscha silently shrugged her shoulders and made no answer to the inquiring glance with which Hermon sought hers, but Myrtilus changed his tone and addressed a grave warning to his friend to consider well that it would be an insult to the manes of his dead parents if he should avoid the old couple from Pelusium, who had been their best friends and had taken the journey hither for his sake.

Hermon looked after him in painful perplexity, but the Biamite also approached the threshold, and holding her head haughtily erect, said coldly: "The choice is difficult for you, as I see. Then recall to your memory again what this night of the full moon means—you are well aware of it—to me. If, nevertheless, you still decide in favour of the banquet with your friends, I can not help it; but I must now know: Shall this night belong to me, or to the daughter of Archias?"

"Is it impossible to talk with you, unlucky girl, as one would with other sensible people?" Hermon burst forth wrathfully. "Everything is carried to extremes; you condemn a brief necessary delay as breach of faith and base treachery. This behaviour is unbearable."

"Then you will not come?" she asked apathetically, laying her hand upon the door; but

Hermon cried out in a tone half beseeching, half imperious: "You must not go so! If you insist upon it, surely I will come. There is no room in your obstinate soul for kind indulgence. No one, by the dog, ever accused me of being specially skilled in this smooth art; yet there may be duties and circumstances——"

Here Ledscha gently opened the door; but, seized with a fear of losing this rare creature, whose singular beauty attracted him powerfully, even now, this peerless model for a work on which he placed the highest hopes, he strode swiftly to her side, and drawing her back from the threshold, exclaimed: "Difficult as it is for me on this special day, I will come, only you must not demand what is impossible. The right course often lies midway. Half the night must belong to the banquet with my old friends and Daphne; the second half——"

"To the barbarian, you think—the spider," she gasped hoarsely. "But my welfare as well as yours depends on the decision. Stay here, or come to the island—you have your choice."

Wrenching herself from his hold as she spoke, she slipped through the doorway and left the room.

Hermon, with a muttered oath, stood still, shrugging his shoulders angrily.

He could do nothing but yield to this obstinate creature's will.

In the atrium Ledscha met the slave Bias, and returned his greeting only by a wave of the hand; but before opening the side door which was to lead her into the open air, she paused, and asked bluntly in the language of their people: "Was Arachne—I don't mean the spider, but the weaver whom the Greeks call by that name—a woman like the rest of us? Yet it is said that she remained victor in a contest with the goddess Athene."

"That is perfectly true," answered Bias, "but she had to atone cruelly for this triumph; the goddess struck her on the forehead with the weaver's shuttle, and when, in her shame and rage, she tried to hang herself, she was transformed into the spider."

Ledscha stood still, and, while drawing the veil over her pallid face, asked with quivering lips, "And is there no other Arachne?"

"Not among mortals," was the reply, "but even here in this house there are more than enough of the disagreeable, creeping creatures which bear the same name."

Ledscha now went down the steps which led to the lawn, and Bias saw that she stumbled on the last one and would have fallen

had not her lithe body regained its balance in time.

"A bad omen!" thought the slave. "If I had the power to build a wall between my master and the spider yonder, it should be higher than the lighthouse of Sostratus. To heed omens guides one safely through life. I know what I know, and will keep my eyes open, for my master too."

CHAPTER IX.

Hermon had intended to add a few more touches to his Demeter, but he could not do it.

Ledscha, her demand, and the resentment with which she had left him, were not to be driven from his mind.

There was no doubt that he must seek her if he was not to lose her, yet he reproached himself for having acted like a thoughtless fool when he proposed to divide the night between her and Daphne.

There was something offensive in the proposal to so proud a creature. He ought to have promised positively to come, and then left the banquet somewhat earlier. It would have been easy to apologize for his late arrival, and Ledscha would have had no cause to be angry with him.

Now she had, and her resentment awakened in him—though he certainly did not lack manly courage—an uncomfortable feeling closely allied to anxiety.

Angered by his own conduct, he asked him-

self whether he loved the barbarian, and could find no satisfactory answer.

At their first meeting he had felt that she was far superior to the other Biamite maidens, not only in beauty but in everything else. The very acerbity of her nature had seemed charming. To win this wonderful, pliant creature, slender as a cypress, whose independence merged into fierce obstinacy, had appeared to him worth any sacrifice; and having perceived in her an admirable model for his Arachne, he had also determined to brave the dangers which might easily arise for the Greek from a love affair with a Biamite girl, whose family was free and distinguished.

It had been easier for him to win her heart than he expected; yet at none of the meetings which she granted him had he rejoiced in the secret bond between them.

Hitherto her austere reserve had been invincible, and during the greater part of their interviews he had been compelled to exert all his influence to soothe, appease her, and atone for imprudent acts which he had committed.

True, she, too, had often allowed herself to display passionate tenderness, but always only to torture him with reproaches and demands inspired by her jealousy, suspicion, and wounded pride.

Yet her beauty, and the strong power of resistance which she offered to his wooing, exerted so bewitching a thrall over him that he had been led into conceding far too much, and making vows which he could not and did not desire to fulfil.

Love had usually been to him a richly flowing well-spring of gay delight, but this bond had plunged him from one vexation into another, one anxiety to another, and now that he had almost reached the goal of his wishes, he could not help fearing that he had transformed Ledscha's love to hate.

Daphne was dear to him. He esteemed her highly, and owed her a great debt of gratitude. Yet in this hour he anathematized her unexpected journey to Tennis; for without it he would have obtained from Ledscha that very day what he desired, and could have returned to Alexandria with the certainty of finding her ready later to pose as the model for his Arachne.

Never could he find anywhere a more fitting one.

He had devoted himself with passionate love to his art, and even his enemies numbered him among its most promising disciples. Yet hitherto he had not succeeded in obtaining a great and undisputed success. On the other hand, he had

experienced what were termed failures in abundant measure.

The art to which he had gained entrance by so severe a struggle, and on whose soil he had laboured diligently enough, proved, so far as outward recognition was concerned, cruel to the enthusiastic disciple. Yet even now he would not have abandoned it at any price; the joy of creation compensated him richly for suffering and disappointment. Confidence in his own powers and the final triumph of his conviction had deserted him only occasionally, and for a few brief hours.

He was born for conflicts. What ill-success, what antagonism and difficulties he had encountered! Some day the laurel which had so long adorned the brow of Myrtilus must also grow green for him and the great talent whose possession he felt. With the Arachne—he was sure of this—he would compel even his opponents to accord him the recognition for which hitherto he had striven in vain.

While pacing restlessly up and down the spacious apartment, stopping from time to time before his work to fix his eyes angrily upon it, he thought of his friend's Demeter, whose head also had Daphne's features, who also bore in her hand a bundle of wheat, and even in attitude

did not differ very widely from his own. And yet—eternal gods!—how thoroughly dissimilar the two were!

In the figure created by Myrtilus, supernatural dignity blended with the utmost womanly charm; in his, a pleasing head rested upon a body in whose formation he had used various models without striving to accomplish anything except to depart as far as possible from established custom, with which he was at variance.

Yet had he not found himself, nevertheless, compelled to follow the old rules? One arm was raised, the other hung down; the right foot was put forward, the left one back.

Exactly the same as in Myrtilus's statue, and thousands of other figures of Demeter!

If he could have used the hammer and chisel, the thing might have become more powerful; but how many things he had had to consider in employing the accursed gold and ivory upon which Archias obstinately insisted!

This hammering, chipping, and filing told unfavourably upon his power and his aspiration toward grandeur.

This time the battle seemed to be lost.

It was fortunate that the conqueror was no other than Myrtilus. Often as he had gone astray in his young life, many as were the errors

he had committed, not even the faintest shadow of an envious feeling concerning his friend's more successful work had ever stained his soul.

True, the fact that fate, in addition to such abundant gifts of mind and spirit, had also endowed the latter with great worldly possessions, while he, but for the generosity of his uncle Archias, must have starved, had often led Hermon to inveigh angrily against the injustice of the gods. Yet he did not grudge Myrtilus the wealth without which he could not imagine him, and which his invalid friend needed to continue successfully the struggle against the insidious disease inherited with the gold. And his sufferings! Hermon could not have endured keener pain had they been his own. He must even rejoice over the poor dear fellow's victory; for if he, Hermon, succeeded with his Arachne as he hoped, it would make Myrtilus—he could swear to it—happier than his own triumph.

After these reflections, which again reminded him of the second appointment and of Ledscha, the sculptor turned away from his work and went to the window to look across at Pelican Island, where she must not await him in vain.

The boat which was to convey him over to it lay ready in the little flotilla, where a magnificently equipped galley had just been moored

to the shore, undoubtedly the one that had brought the guests from Pelusium hither.

The best thing he could do was to greet them at once, share the banquet with them, and, before the dessert was served, seek the beautiful woman whom his absence threatened to make his foe. And she was certainly justified in resenting it if, with cruel lack of consideration, he paid no heed to what had been prophesied for her on this night of the full moon.

For the first time compassion mingled with his feelings for Ledscha. If to avoid the fleeting censure of aristocratic friends he left in the lurch the simple barbarian maiden who loved him with ardent passion, it was no evidence of resolute strength of soul, but of pitiful, reprehensible weakness. No, no! He must take the nocturnal voyage in order not to grieve Ledscha.

Soon after the girl's abrupt departure he dressed himself in festal garments for the banquet. It would flatter Ledscha also if he went to her in this attire and, with his figure drawn up to its full height, he walked toward the door to go to the Alexandrian's tent.

But what did this mean? Myrtilus was standing before his Demeter, scanning it intently with his keen artist eyes. Hermon had not noticed his entrance, and did not disturb him now,

but fixed his gaze upon his mobile features in intense expectation.

There were few of his fellow-artists whose opinion he valued as highly as that of this darling of the Muse.

At a slight shake of the head, which Hermon interpreted as disapproval, he clinched his teeth; but soon his lips relaxed and his breast heaved with a sigh of relief, for the sunny glance that Myrtilus bent upon the face of the goddess seemed to show Hermon that it aroused his approval, and, as if relieved from an oppressive nightmare, he approached his friend.

The latter turned toward him, exclaiming: "Daphne! As in the case of yonder bust, you have succeeded most perfectly with this dear face—only——"

"Only," Hermon repeated slowly; "I am familiar with that evil word. Doubts knock at the door with it. Out with them honestly. I gave up my last hope of the prize yesterday while looking at your Demeter. Besides, careful scrutiny has just destroyed the last gleam of satisfaction with my own work. But if you like the head, what seem to you the greatest defects in the figure?"

"It has nothing to do with defects, which, with your rare ability, can scarcely exist," re-

plied the other, the faint pink flush in his beardless cheeks deepening to a more vivid hue. "It refers rather to the expression which you have given the divinity in yonder statue." Here Myrtilus hesitated, and, turning so that he stood face to face with Hermon, asked frankly, "Did you ever seek the goddess and, when you found her, did you feel any supernatural power and beauty?"

"What a question!" exclaimed Hermon in astonishment. "A pupil of Straton, and go in search of beings and powers whose existence he denies! What my mother instilled into my heart I lost with my childhood, and you address your question only to the artist who holds his own ground, not to the boy. The power that calls creation to life, and maintains it, has for me long had nothing in common with those beings like mortals whom the multitude designates by the name of divinities."

"I think differently," replied Myrtilus. "While I numbered myself among the Epicureans, whose doctrine still possesses the greatest charm for me, I nevertheless shared the master's opinion that it is insulting the gods to suppose that they will disturb their blissful repose for the sake of us insignificant mortals. Now my mind and my experience rebel against holding to this

view, yet I believe with Epicurus, and with you, that the eternal laws of Nature bow to neither divine nor human will."

"And yet," said Hermon, "you expect me to trouble myself about those who are as powerless as myself!"

"I only wished that you might do so," answered Myrtilus; "for they are not powerless to those who from the first assumed that they can do nothing in opposition to those changeless laws. The state, too, rules according to them, and the wise king who refrains from interfering with them in the smallest trifle can therefore wield the sceptre with mighty power. So, in my opinion, it is perfectly allowable to expect aid from the gods. But we will let that pass. A healthy man, full of exuberant vigour like yourself, rarely learns early what they can bestow in suffering and misfortune; yet where the great majority believe in them, he, too, will be unable to help forming some idea of them; nay, even you and I have experienced it. By a thousand phenomena they force themselves into the world which surrounds us and our emotional life. Epicurus, who denied their power, saw in them at least immortal beings who possess in stainless perfection everything which in mortals is disfigured by errors, weaknesses, and afflic-

tions. To him they are the intensified, reflected image of our own nature, and I think we can do nothing wiser than to cling to that, because it shows us to what heights of beauty and power, intellect, goodness, and purity we may attain. To completely deny their existence would hardly be possible even for you, because their persons have found a place in your imagination. Since this is the case, it can only benefit you to recognise in them magnificent models, by whose means we artists, if we imitate, perfect, and model them, will create works far more sublime and beautiful than anything visible to our senses which we meet here beneath the sun."

"It is this very superiority in sublimity and beauty which I, and those who pursue the same path with me, oppose," replied Hermon. "Nature is sufficient for us. To take anything from her, mutilates; to add anything, disfigures her."

"But not," replied Myrtilus firmly, "when it is done only in a special sense, and within the limits of Nature, to which the gods also belong. The final task of art, fiercely as you and your few followers contend against it, lies in the disentanglement, enhancing, and ennobling of Nature. You, too, ought not to overlook it when you undertake to model a Demeter; for she is a goddess, no mortal like yourself. The rest—

or I ought rather to say the alteration which converts the mortal woman into the immortal one, the goddess—I miss, and with special regret, because you do not even deem it worth consideration."

"That I shall never do," retorted Hermon irritably, "so long as it is a changing chimera which presents itself differently to every mind."

"Yet, should it really be a chimera, it is at any rate a sublime one," Myrtilus protested, "and whoever among us artists wanders through Nature with open eyes and heart, and then examines his own soul, will find it worth while to attempt to give his ideal form."

"Whatever stirs my breast during such walks, unless it is some unusual human being, I leave to the poet," replied Hermon. "I should be satisfied with the Demeter yonder, and you, too, probably, if—entirely apart from that—I had only succeeded fully and entirely in making her an individual—that is, a clearly outlined, distinct personality. This, you have often told me, is just wherein I am usually most successful. But here, I admit, I am baffled. Demeter hovered before me as a kindly dispenser of good gifts, a faithful, loving wife. Daphne's head expresses this; but in modelling the body I lost sight of the whole creation. While, for instance,

in my fig-eater, every toe, every scrap of the tattered garments, belongs to the street urchin whom I wished to represent, in the goddess everything came by chance as the model suggested it, and you know that I used several. Had the Demeter from head to foot resembled Daphne, who has so much in common with our goddess, the statue would have been harmonious, complete, and you would perhaps have been the first to acknowledge it."

"By no means," Myrtilus eagerly interrupted. "What our statues of the gods are we two know best: a wooden block, covered with gold and sheets of ivory. But to tens of thousands the statue of the divinity must be much more. When they raise their hearts, eyes, hands to it in prayer, they must be possessed by the idea of the deity which animated us while creating it, and with which we, as it were, permeated it. If it shows them only a woman endowed with praiseworthy qualities——"

"Then," interrupted Hermon, "the worshipper should thank the sculptor; for is it not more profitable to him to be encouraged by the statue to emulate the human virtues whose successful embodiment it shows him than to strive for the aid of the botchwork of human hands, which possesses as much or as little power as the

wood, gold, and ivory that compose it? If the worshipper does not appeal to the statue, but to the goddess, I fear it will be no less futile. So I shall consider it no blemish if you see in my Demeter a mortal woman, and no goddess; nay, it reconciles me in some degree to her weaknesses, to which I by no means close my eyes. I, too—I confess it—often feel a great desire to give the power of imagination greater play, and I know the divinities in whom I have lost faith as well as any one; for I, too, was once a child, and few have ever prayed to them more fervently, but with the increasing impulse toward liberty came the perception: There are no gods, and whoever bows to the power of the immortals makes himself a slave. So what I banished from life I will also remove from art, and model nothing which might not meet me to-day or to-morrow."

"Then, as an honest man, abstain altogether from making statues of the gods," interrupted his friend.

"That was my intention long ago, as you are aware," the other answered.

"You could not commit a worse robbery upon yourself," cried Myrtilus. "I know you; nay, perhaps I see farther into your soul than you yourself. By ingenious fetters you force

the mighty winged intellect to content itself within the narrow world of reality. But the time when you will yourself rend the bonds and find the divinity you have lost, will come, and then, with your mighty power once more free, you will outstrip most of us, and me also if I live to see it."

Then he pressed his hand upon his rattling chest and walked slowly to the couch; but Hermon followed, helped him to lie down, and with affectionate solicitude arranged his pillows.

"It is nothing," Myrtilus said soothingly, after a few minutes' silence. "My undermined strength has been heavily taxed to-day. The Olympians know how calmly I await death. It ends all things. Nothing will be left of me except the ashes, to which you will reduce my body, and what you call 'possession.' But even this can no longer belong to me after death, because I shall then be no more, and the idea of possession requires a possessor. My estate, too, is now disposed of. I have just been to the notary, and sixteen witnesses—neither more nor less—have signed my will according to the custom of this ceremonious country. There, now, if you please, go before me, and let me stay here alone a little while. Remember me to Daphne and the Pelusinians. I will join you in an hour."

CHAPTER X.

"WHEN the moon is over Pelican Island."

How often Ledscha had repeated this sentence to herself while Hermon was detained by Daphne and her Pelusinian guests!

When she entered the boat after nightfall she exclaimed hopefully, sure of her cause, "When the moon is over Pelican Island he will come."

Her goal was quickly reached in the skiff; the place selected for the nocturnal meeting was a familiar one to her.

The pirates had remained absent from it quite two years. Formerly they had often visited the spot to conceal their arms and booty on the densely wooded island. The large papyrus thicket on the shore also hid boats from spying eyes, and near the spot where Ledscha landed was a grassy seat which looked like an ordinary resting place, but beneath it the corsairs had built a long, walled passage, that led to the other side of the island, and had enabled many a fugi-

tive to vanish from the sight of pursuers, as though the earth had swallowed them.

"When the moon is over the island," Ledscha repeated after she had waited more than an hour.

The time had not yet come; the expanse of water lay before her motionless, in hue a dull, leaden gray, and only the dimly illumined air and a glimmering radiance along the edges of the waves that washed the island showed that the moon was already brightening the night.

When its full orb floated above the island Hermon, too, would appear, and the happiness which had been predicted to Ledscha would begin.

Happiness?

A bitter smile hovered around her delicately cut lips as she repeated the word.

Hitherto no feeling was more distant from her; for when love and longing began to stir in her heart, it seemed as though a hideous spider was weaving its web about her, and vague fears, painful memories, and in their train fierce hate would force glad expectation into the shadow.

Yet she yearned with passionate fervour to see Hermon again, and when he was once there all must be well between them. The predic-

tion of old Tabus, who ruled as mistress over so many demons, could not deceive.

After Ledscha had so lately reminded the lover who so vehemently roused her jealous wrath what this night of the full moon meant to her, she could rely upon his appearance in spite of everything.

Various matters undoubtedly held him firmly enough in Tennis—she admitted this to herself after she grew calmer—but he had promised to come; he would surely enter the boat, and she—she would submit to share the night with the Hellene.

Her whole being longed for the bliss awaiting her, and it could come from no one save the man whose lips would seek hers when the moon rose over the Pelican Island.

How tardily and sluggishly the cow-headed goddess who bore the silver orb between her horns rose to-night! how slowly the time passed, yet she did not move forward more certainly that the man whom Ledscha expected must arrive.

Of the possibility of his non-appearance she would not think; but when the fear that she was perhaps looking for him in vain assailed her, the blood crimsoned her face as if she felt the shame of a humiliating insult. Yet why

should she make the period of waiting more torturing than it was already?

Surely he *must* come!

Sometimes she rested on the grassy seat and gazed across the dull gray surface of the water into the distance; sometimes she walked to and fro, stopping at every turn to look across at Tennis and the bright torches and lights which surrounded the Alexandrian's tent.

So one quarter of an hour after another passed away.

A light breeze rose, and gradually the tops of the rushes began to shine, and the leafage before, beside, and above her to glitter in the silvery light.

The water was no longer calm, but furrowed by countless little ripples, on whose crests the rays from above played, sparkling and flashing restlessly. A web of shimmering silvery radiance covered the edges of every island, and suddenly the brilliant full moon was reflected in argent lustre like a magnificent quivering column upon the surface of the water, now rippled by the evening breeze.

The time during which Ledscha could repeat "When the moon is over Pelican Island" was past; already its course had led it beyond.

The island lay behind it, and it continued its pilgrimage before the young girl's eyes.

The glittering column of light upon the water proved that she was not mistaken; the time which she had appointed for Hermon had already expired.

The moon in calm majesty sailed farther and farther onward in its course, and with it minute after minute elapsed, until they became a half hour, then a whole one.

"How long is it since the moon was over Pelican Island?" was the question which now pressed itself upon her again and again, and to which she found an answer at every glance upward, for she had learned to estimate time by the position of the stars.

Rarely was the silence of the night interrupted by the call of a human being or the barking of a dog from the city, or even the hooting of an owl at a still greater distance; but the farther the moon moved on above her the fiercer grew the uproar in Ledscha's proud, cruelly wronged soul. She felt offended, scorned, insulted, and at the same time defrauded of the happiness which this night of the full moon contained for her. Or had the demons who promised happiness meant something else in their prediction than Hermon's love? Was she to

owe the bliss they had foretold to hate and pitiless retribution?

When the midnight hour had nearly arrived she prepared to depart, but after she had already set her foot on the edge of the boat she returned to the grassy seat. She would wait a little longer yet. Then there would be nothing which could give Hermon a right to consideration; then she might let loose upon him the avenging powers at her command.

Ledscha again gazed over the calm landscape, but in the wild tumult of her heart she no longer distinguished the details upon which her eyes rested. Doubtless she saw the light mists hovering like ghosts, or the restless shades of the unburied dead, over the shining expanse before her, and the filmy vapours that veiled the brightness of the stars, but she had ceased to question the heavenly bodies about the time.

What did she care for the progress of the hours, since the constellation of Charles's Wain showed her that it was past midnight?

The moon no longer stood forth in sharp outlines against the deep azure of the vaulted sky, but, robbed of its radiance, floated in a circle of dimly illumined mists.

Not only the feelings which stirred Led-

scha's soul, but the scene around her, had gained a totally different aspect.

Since every hope of the happiness awaiting her was destroyed, she no longer sought to palliate the wrongs Hermon had inflicted upon her. While dwelling on them, she by no means forgot the trivial purpose for which the artist intended to use her charms; and when she again gazed up at the slightly clouded sky, the shrouded moon no longer reminded her of the silver orb between the horns of Astarte.

She did not ask herself how the transformation had occurred, but in its place, high above her head, hung a huge gray spider. Its gigantic limbs extended over the whole firmament, and seemed striving to clutch and stifle the world beneath. The enormous monster was weaving its gray net over Tennis, and all the islands in the water, the Pelican Island, and she herself upon the seat of turf, and held them all prisoned in it.

It was a horrible vision, fraught with terrors which, even when she shut her eyes in order to escape it, showed very little change.

Assailed by anxious fears, Ledscha started up, and a few seconds later was urging her boat with steady strokes toward the Owl's Nest.

Even now lights were still shining from the

Alexandrian's tent through the sultry, mist-veiled night.

There seemed to be no waking life on the pirates' island. Even old Tabus had probably put out the fire and gone to sleep, for deathlike silence and deep darkness surrounded it.

Had Hanno, who agreed to meet her here after midnight, also failed to come? Had the pirate learned, like the Greek, to break his promise?

Only half conscious what she was doing, she left the boat; but her slender foot had scarcely touched the land when a tall figure emerged from the thicket near the shore and approached her through the darkness.

"Hanno!" she exclaimed, as if relieved from a burden, and the young pirate repeated "Hanno" as if the name was the watchword of the night.

Her own name, uttered in a tone of intense yearning, followed. Not another syllable accompanied it, but the expression with which it fell upon her ear revealed so plainly what the young pirate felt for and expected from her that, in spite of the darkness which concealed her, she felt her face flush.

Then he tried to clasp her hand, and she dared not withdraw it from the man whom she

had chosen for her tool. So she unresistingly permitted him to hold her right hand while he whispered his desire to take the place of the fallen Abus and make her his wife.

Ledscha, in hurried, embarrassed tones, answered that she appreciated the honour of his suit, but before she gave full consent she must discuss an important matter with him.

Then Hanno begged her to go out on the water.

His father and his brother Labaja were sitting in the house by the fire with his grandmother. They had learned, in following the trade of piracy, to hide the glimmer of lights. The old people had approved his choice, but the conversation in the dwelling would soon be over, and then the opportunity of seeing each other alone would be at an end.

Without uttering a word in reply, Ledscha stepped back into the boat, but Hanno plied the oars with the utmost caution and guided the skiff without the slightest sound away from the island to an open part of the water far distant from any shore.

Here he took in the oars and asked her to speak. They had no cause to fear being overheard, for the surrounding mists merely subdued the light of the full moon, and no

other boat could have approached them unobserved.

The few night birds, sweeping swiftly on their strong pinions from one island to another, flew past them like flitting shadows. One hawk only, in search of nocturnal booty, circled around the motionless skiff, and sometimes, with expanded wings, swooped down close to the couple who were talking together so eagerly; but both spoke so low that it would have been impossible, even for the bird's keen hearing, to follow the course of their consultation. Merely a few louder words and exclamations reached the height where it hovered.

The young pirate himself was obliged to listen with the most strained attention while Ledscha, in low whispers, accused the Greek sculptor of having basely wronged and deceived her; but the curse with which Hanno received this acknowledgment reached even the bird circling around the boat, and it seemed as if it wished to express its approval to the corsair, for this time its fierce croak, as it suddenly swooped down to the surface of the water behind the boat, sounded shrilly through the silent night. But it soon soared again, and now Ledscha's declaration that she would become Hanno's bride only on condition that he would aid

her to punish the Hellenic traitor also reached him.

Then came the words "valuable booty," "slight risk," "thanks and reward."

The girl's whispered allusion to two colossal statues made of pure gold and genuine ivory was followed by a laugh of disagreeable meaning from the pirate.

At last he raised his deep voice to ask whether Ledscha, if the venture in which he would willingly risk his life were successful, would accompany him on board the Hydra, the good ship whose command his father intrusted to him. The firm "Yes" with which she answered, and her indignant exclamation as she repulsed Hanno's premature attempt at tenderness, might have been heard by the hawk even at a greater distance.

Then the pirate's promised bride lowered her voice again, and did not raise her tones until she saw in imagination the fulfilment of the judgment which she was calling down upon the man who had torn her heart with such pitiless cruelty.

Was this the happiness predicted for her on the night of the full moon? It might be, and, radiant with secret joy, her eyes sparkling and her bosom heaving as if her foot was already

on the breast of the fallen foe, she assured Hanno that the gold and the ivory should belong to him, and to him alone; but not until he had delivered the base traitor to her alive, and left his punishment in her hands, would she be ready to go with him wherever he wished—not until then, and not one moment earlier.

The pirate, with a proud "I'll capture him!" consented to this condition; but Ledscha, in hurried words, now described how she had planned the attack, while the corsair, at her bidding, plied the oars so as to bring the boat nearer to the scene of the assault.

The vulture followed the skiff; but when it stopped opposite to the large white building, one side of which was washed by the waves, Ledscha pointed to the windows of Hermon's studio, exclaiming hoarsely to the young pirate: "You will seize him there—the Greek with the long, soft black beard, and the slender figure, I mean. Then you will bind and gag him, but, you hear, without killing him, for I can only inflict what he deserves upon the living man. I am not bargaining for a dead one."

Just at that instant the bird of prey, with a shrill, greedy cry, as if it were invited to a delicious banquet, flew far away into the distance and did not return. It flew toward the left; the

girl noticed it, and her heavy black eyebrows, which already met, contracted still more. The direction taken by the bird, which soon vanished in the darkness of the night, indicated approaching misfortune; but she was here only to sow destruction, and the more terrible growth it attained the better!

With an acuteness which aroused the admiration of the young corsair, who was trained to similar plots, she explained hers.

That they must wait until after the departure of the Alexandrian with her numerous train, and for the first dark night, was a matter of course.

One signal was to notify Hanno to hold himself in readiness, another to inform him that every one in the white house had gone to rest, and that Hermon was there too. The pirates were to enter the black-bearded Greek's studio. While some were shattering his statues to carry away in sacks the gold and ivory which they contained, others were to force their way into Myrtilus's workroom, which was on the opposite side of the house. There they would find the second statue; but this they must spare, because, on account of the great fame of its creator, it was more valuable than the other. The fair-haired artist was ill, and it would be no

difficult matter to take him alive, even if he should put himself on the defensive. Hermon, on the contrary, was a strong fellow, and to bind him without injuring him severely would require both strength and skill. Yet it must be done, for only in case Hanno succeeded in delivering both sculptors to her alive would she consider herself—she could not repeat it often enough—bound to fulfil what she had promised him.

With the exception of the two artists, only Myrtilus's servant, the old doorkeeper, and Bias, Hermon's slave, remained during the night in the house which was to be attacked, and Hanno would undertake the assault with twenty-five sturdy fellows whom he commanded on the Hydra. If his brother Labaja consented to share in the assault, this force could be considerably increased.

To take the old corsair into their confidence now would not be advisable, for, on account of his mother's near presence, he would scarcely consent to enter into the peril. Should the venture fail, everything would be over; but if it succeeded, the old man could only praise the courage and skill with which it had been executed.

Nothing was to be feared from the coast guard, for since Abus's death the authorities

believed that piracy had vanished from these waters, and the ships commanded by Satabus and his sons had been admitted from Pontus into the Tanite arm of the Nile as trading vessels.

CHAPTER XI.

While Hanno was discussing these considerations, he rowed the boat past the landing place from which the "garden" with the Alexandrian's tent could be seen.

The third hour after midnight had begun. Smoking flames were still rising from the pitch pans and blazing torches, and long rows of lanterns also illumined the broad space.

It was as light as day in the vicinity of the tent, and Biamite huntsmen and traders were moving to and fro among the slaves and attendants as though it was market time.

"Your father, too," Hanno remarked in his awkward fashion, "will scarcely make life hard for us. We shall probably find him in Pontus. He is getting a cargo of wood for Egypt there. We have had dealings with him a long time. He thought highly of Abus, and I, too, have already been useful to him. There were handsome young fellows on the Pontine coast, and we captured them. At the peril of our lives we

took them to the mart. He may even risk it in Alexandria. So the old man makes over to him a large number of these youths, and often a girl into the bargain, and he does it far too cheaply. One might envy him the profit—if it were not your father! When you are once my wife, I'll make a special contract with him about the slaves. And, besides, since the last great capture, in which the old man allowed me a share of my own, I, too, need not complain of poverty. I shall be ready for the dowry. Do you want to know what you are worth to me?"

But Ledscha's attention was attracted by other things, and even after Hanno, with proud conceit, repeated his momentous question, he waited in vain for a reply.

Then he perceived that the girl was gazing at the brilliantly lighted square as if spellbound, and now he himself saw before the tent a shed with a canopied roof, and beneath it cushioned couches, on which several Greeks—men and women—were half sitting, half lying, watching with eager attention the spectacle which a slender young Hellenic woman was presenting to them.

The tall man with the magnificent black beard, who seemed fairly devouring her with his eyes, must be the sculptor whom Ledscha commanded him to capture.

To the rude pirate the Greek girl, who in a light, half-transparent bombyx robe, was exhibiting herself to the eyes of the men upon a pedestal draped with cloths, seemed bold and shameless.

Behind her stood two female attendants, holding soft white garments ready, and a handsome Pontine boy with black, waving locks, who gazed up at her waiting for her signs.

"Nearer," Ledscha ordered the pirate in a stifled voice, and he rowed the boat noiselessly under the shadow of a willow on the bank. But the skiff had scarcely been brought to a stop there when an elderly matron, who shared the couch of an old Macedonian man of a distinguished, soldierly appearance, called the name "Niobe."

The Hellene on the pedestal took a cloth from the hand of one of the female attendants, and beckoned to the boy, who obediently drew through his girdle the short blue chiton which hung only to his knees, and sprang upon the platform.

There the Greek girl manipulated in some way the red tresses piled high upon her head, and confined above the brow by a costly gold diadem, flung the white linen fabric which the young slave handed to her over her head, wound

her arm around the shoulders of the raven-locked boy, and drew him toward her with passionate tenderness. At the same time she raised the end of the linen drapery with her left hand, spreading it over him like a protecting canopy.

The mobile features which had just smiled so radiantly expressed mortal terror, and the pirate, to whom even the name "Niobe" was unfamiliar, looked around him for the terrible danger threatening the innocent child, from which the woman on the pedestal was protecting it with loving devotion.

The mortal terror of a mother robbed by a higher power of her child could scarcely be more vividly depicted, and yet haughty defiance hovered around her slightly pouting lips; the uplifted hands seemed not only anxiously to defend, but also to defy an invisible foe with powerless anger.

The pirate's eyes rested on this spectacle as if spellbound, and the man who in Pontus had dragged hundreds of young creatures—boys and girls—on his ship to sell them into slavery, never thinking of the tears which he thereby caused in huts and mansions, clinched his rough hand to attack the base wretch who was robbing the poor mother of her lovely darling.

But just as Hanno was rising to look around

him for the invisible evildoer, the loud shouts of many voices startled him. He glanced toward the pedestal; but now, instead of the hapless mother, he found there the bold woman whom he had previously seen, as radiant as if some great piece of good fortune had befallen her, bowing and waving her hand to the other Greeks, who were thanking her with loud applause.

The sorely threatened boy, bowing merrily, sprang to the ground; but Hanno put his hand on Ledscha's arm, and in great perplexity whispered, "What did that mean?"

"Hush!" said the girl softly, stretching her slender neck toward the illuminated square, for the performer had remained standing upon the pedestal, and Chrysilla, Daphne's companion, sat erect on her couch, exclaiming, "If it is agreeable to you, beautiful Althea, show us Nike crowning the victor."

Even the Biamite's keen ear could not catch the reply and the purport of the rapid conversation which followed; but she guessed the point in question when the young men who were present rose hastily, rushed toward the pedestal, loosed the wreaths from their heads, and offered them to the Greek girl whom Chrysilla had just called "beautiful Althea."

Four Hellenic officers in the strong military force under Philippus, the commandant of the "Key of Egypt," as Pelusium was justly called, had accompanied the old Macedonian general to visit his friend Archias's daughter at Tennis; but Althea rejected their garlands with an explanation which seemed to satisfy them.

Ledscha could not hear what she said, but when only Hermon and Myrtilus still stood with their wreaths of flowers opposite the "beautiful Althea," and she glanced hesitatingly from one to the other, as if she found the choice difficult, and then drew from her finger a sparkling ring, the Biamite detected the swift look of understanding which Hermon exchanged with her.

The girl's heart began to throb faster, and, with the keen premonition of a jealous soul, she recognised in Althea her rival and foe.

Now there was no doubt of it; now, as the actress, skilled in every wile, hid the hand holding the ring, as well as the other empty one, behind her back, she would know how to manage so that she could use the garland which Hermon handed her.

Ledscha's foreboding was instantly fulfilled, for when Althea held out her little tightly clinched fist to the artists and asked Myrtilus to choose, the hand to which he pointed and

she then opened was empty, and she took from the other the ring, which she displayed with well-feigned regret to the spectators.

Then Hermon knelt before her, and, as he offered Althea his wreath, his dark eyes gazed so ardently into the blue ones of the red-haired Greek—like Queen Arsinoë, she was of Thracian descent—that Ledscha was now positively certain she knew for whose sake her lover had so basely betrayed her.

How she hated this bold woman!

Yet she was forced to keep quiet, and pressed her lips tightly together as Althea seized the white sheet and with marvellous celerity wound it about her until it fell in exquisite folds like a long robe.

Surprise, curiosity, and a pleasant sense of satisfaction in seeing what seemed to her a shameless display withdrawn from her lover's eyes, rendered it easier for Ledscha to maintain her composure; yet she felt the blood throbbing in her temples as Hermon remained kneeling before the Hellene, gazing intently into her expressive face.

Was it not too narrow wholly to please the man who had known how to praise her own beauty so passionately? Did not the outlines of Althea's figure, which the bombyx robe only

partially concealed, lack roundness even more than her own?

And yet! As soon as Althea had transformed the sheet into a robe, and held the wreath above him, Hermon's gaze rested on hers as though enraptured, while from her bright blue eyes a flood of ardent admiration poured upon the man for whom she held the victor's wreath.

This was done with the upper portion of her body bending very far forward. The slender figure was poised on one foot; the other, covered to the ankle with the long robe, hovered in the air. Had not the wings which, as Nike, belonged to her been lacking, every one would have been convinced that she was flying—that she had just descended from the heights of Olympus to crown the kneeling victor. Not only her hand, her gaze and her every feature awarded the prize to the man at her feet.

There was no doubt that, if Nike herself came to the earth to make the best man happy with the noblest of crowns, the spectacle would be a similar one.

And Hermon! No garlanded victor could look up to the gracious divinity more joyously, more completely enthralled by grateful rapture.

The applause which now rang out more and

more loudly was certainly not undeserved, but it pierced Ledscha's soul like a mockery, like the bitterest scorn.

Hanno, on the contrary, seemed to consider the scene scarcely worth looking at. Something more powerful was required to stir him. He was particularly averse to all exhibitions. The utmost which his relatives could induce the quiet, reserved man to do when they ventured into the great seaports was to attend the animal fights and the games of the athletes. He felt thoroughly happy only when at sea, on board of his good ship. His best pleasure was to gaze up at the stars on calm nights, guide the helm, and meanwhile dream—of late most gladly of making the beautiful girl who had seemed to him worthy of his brave brother Abus, his own wife.

In the secluded monotony of his life as a sea-rover memory had exalted Ledscha into the most desirable of all women, and the slaughtered Abus into the greatest of heroes.

To win the love of this much-praised maiden seemed to Hanno peerless happiness, and the young corsair felt that he was worthy of it; for on the high seas, when a superior foe was to be opposed by force and stratagem, when a ship was to be boarded and death spread over her

deck, he had proved himself a man of unflinching courage.

His suit had progressed more easily than he expected. His father would rejoice, and his heart exulted at the thought of encountering a serious peril for the girl he loved. His whole existence was a venture of life, and, had he had ten to lose, they would not have been too dear a price to him to win Ledscha.

While Althea, as the goddess of Victory, held the wreath aloft, and loud applause hailed her, Hanno was thinking of the treasures which he had garnered since his father had allowed him a share of the booty, and of the future.

When he had accumulated ten talents of gold he would give up piracy, like Abus, and carry on his own ships wood and slaves from Pontus to Egypt, and textiles from Tennis, arms and other manufactured articles from Alexandria to the Pontine cities. In this way Ledscha's father had become a rich man, and he would also, not for his own sake—he needed little—but to make life sweet for his wife, surround her with splendour and luxury, and adorn her beautiful person with costly jewels. Many a stolen ornament was already lying in the safe hiding place that even his brother Labaja did not know.

At last the shouts died away, and as the stopping of the clattering wheel wakes the miller, so the stillness on the shore roused Hanno from his dream.

What was it that Ledscha saw there so fascinating that she did not even hear his low call?

His father and Labaja had undoubtedly left his grandmother's house long ago, and were looking for him in vain.

Yes, he was right ; the old pirate's shrill whistle reached his ear from the Owl's Nest, and he was accustomed to obedience.

So, lightly touching Ledscha on the shoulder, he whispered that he must return to the island at once. His father would be rejoiced if she went with him.

"To-morrow," she answered in a tone of resolute denial. Then, reminding him once more of the meaning of the signals she had promised to give, she waved her hand to him, sprang swiftly past him to the prow of the boat, caught an overhanging bough of the willow on the shore, and, as she had learned during the games of her childhood, swung herself as lightly as a bird into the thicket at the water's edge, which concealed her from every eye.

CHAPTER XII.

WITHOUT even vouchsafing Hanno another glance, Ledscha glided forward in the shadow of the bushes to the great sycamore, whose thick, broad top on the side toward the tents was striped with light from the flood of radiance streaming from them. On the opposite side the leafage vanished in the darkness of the night, but Myrtilus had had a bench placed there, that he might rest in the shade, and from this spot the girl could obtain the best view of what she desired to see.

How gay and animated it was under the awning!

A throng of companions had arrived with the Pelusinians, and some also had probably been on the ship which—she knew it from Bias—had come to Tennis directly from Alexandria that afternoon. The galley was said to belong to Philotas, an aristocratic relative of King Ptolemy. If she was not mistaken, he was the stately young Greek who was just picking up the os-

trich-feather fan that had slipped from Daphne's lap.

The performance was over.

Young slaves in gay garments, and nimble female servants with glittering gold circlets round their upper arms and on their ankles, were passing from couch to couch, and from one guest to another, offering refreshments.

Hermon had risen from his knees, and the wreath of bright flowers again adorned his black curls. He held himself as proudly erect as if the goddess of Victory herself had crowned him, while Althea was reaping applause and thanks.

Ledscha gazed past her and the others to watch every movement of the sculptor.

It was scarcely the daughter of Archias who had detained Hermon, for he made only a brief answer—Ledscha could not hear what it was—when she accosted him pleasantly, to devote himself to Althea, and—this could be perceived even at a distance—thank her with ardent devotion.

And now—now he even raised the hem of her peplos to his lips.

A scornful smile hovered around Ledscha's mouth; but Daphne's guests also noticed this mark of homage—an unusual one in their circle—and young Philotas, who had followed

Daphne from Alexandria, cast a significant glance at a man with a smooth, thin, birdlike face, whose hair was already turning gray. His name was Proclus, and, as grammateus of the Dionysian games and high priest of Apollo, he was one of the most influential men in Alexandria, especially as he was one of the favoured courtiers of Queen Arsinoë.

He had gone by her command to the Syrian court, had enjoyed on his return, at Pelusium, with his travelling companion Althea, the hospitality of Philippus, and accompanied the venerable officer to Tennis in order to win him over to certain plans. In spite of his advanced age, he still strove to gain the favour of fair women, and the sculptor's excessive ardour had displeased him.

So he let his somewhat mocking glance wander from Althea to Hermon, and called to the latter: "My congratulations, young master; but I need scarcely remind you that Nike suffers no one—not even goodness and grace personified—to take from her hand what it is her sole duty to bestow."

While speaking he adjusted the laurel on his own thin hair; but Thyone, the wife of Philippus, answered eagerly: "If I were a young man like Hermon, instead of an old woman,

noble Proclus, I think the wreath which Beauty bestows would render me scarcely less happy than stern Nike's crown of victory."

While making this pleasant reply the matron's wrinkled face wore an expression of such cordial kindness, and her deep voice was so winning in its melody, that Hermon forced himself to heed the glance of urgent warning Daphne cast at him, and leave the sharp retort that hovered on his lips unuttered. Turning half to the grammateus, half to the matron, he merely said, in a cold, self-conscious tone, that Thyone was right. In this gay circle, the wreath of bright flowers proffered by the hands of a beautiful woman was the dearest of all gifts, and he would know how to value it.

"Until other more precious ones cast it into oblivion," observed Althea. "Let me see, Hermon: ivy and roses. The former is lasting, but the roses——" She shook her finger in roguish menace at the sculptor as she spoke.

"The roses," Proclus broke in again, "are of course the most welcome to our young friend from such a hand; yet these flowers of the goddess of Beauty have little in common with his art, which is hostile to beauty. Still, I do not know what wreath will be offered to the new tendency with which he surprised us."

At this Hermon raised his head higher, and answered sharply: "Doubtless there must have been few of them, since you, who are so often among the judges, do not know them. At any rate, those which justice bestows have hitherto been lacking."

"I should deplore that," replied Proclus, stroking his sharp chin with his thumb and forefinger; "but I fear that our beautiful Nike also cared little for this lofty virtue of the judge in the last coronation. However, her immortal model lacks it often enough."

"Because she is a woman," said one of the young officers, laughing; and another added gaily: "That very thing may be acceptable to us soldiers. For my part, I think everything about the goddess of Victory is beautiful and just, that she may remain graciously disposed toward us. Nay, I accuse the noble Althea of withholding from Nike, in her personation, her special ornament—her swift, powerful wings."

"She gave those to Eros, to speed his flight," laughed Proclus, casting a meaning look at Althea and Hermon.

No one failed to notice that this jest alluded to the love which seemed to have been awakened in the sculptor as quickly as in the personator of the goddess of Victory, and, while it excited

the merriment of the others, the blood mounted into Hermon's cheeks; but Myrtilus perceived what was passing in the mind of his irritable friend, and, as the grammateus praised Nike because in this coronation she had omitted the laurel, the fair-haired Greek interrupted him with the exclamation:

"Quite right, noble Proclus, the grave laurel does not suit our gay pastime; but roses belong to the artist everywhere, and are always welcome to him. The more, the better!"

"Then we will wait till the laurel is distributed in some other place," replied the grammateus; and Myrtilus quickly added, "I will answer for it that Hermon does not leave it empty-handed."

"No one will greet the work which brings your friend the wreath of victory with warmer joy," Proclus protested. "But, if I am correctly informed, yonder house hides completed treasures whose inspection would give the fitting consecration to this happy meeting. Do you know what an exquisite effect gold and ivory statues produce in a full glow of lamplight? I first learned it a short time ago at the court of King Antiochus. There is no lack of lights here. What do you say, gentlemen? Will you not have the studios lighted till the rooms

are as bright as day, and add a noble enjoyment of art to the pleasures of this wonderful night?"

But Hermon and Myrtilus opposed this proposal with equal decision.

Their refusal awakened keen regret, and the old commandant of Pelusium would not willingly yield to it.

Angrily shaking his large head, around which, in spite of his advanced age, thick snow-white locks floated like a lion's mane, he exclaimed, "Must we then really return to our Pelusium, where Ares restricts the native rights of the Muses, without having admired the noble works which arose in such mysterious secrecy here, where Arachne rules and swings the weaver's shuttle?"

"But my two cruel cousins have closed their doors even upon me, who came here for the sake of their works," Daphne interrupted, "and, as Father Zeus is threatening a storm—just see what black clouds are rising!—we ought not to urge our artists further; a solemn oath forbids them to show their creations now to any one."

This earnest assurance silenced the curious, and, while the conversation took another turn, the gray-haired general's wife drew Myrtilus aside.

Hermon's parents had been intimate friends of her own, as well as of her husband's, and with the interest of sincere affection she desired to know whether the young sculptor could really hope for the success of which Myrtilus had just spoken.

It was years since she had visited Alexandria, but what she heard of Hermon's artistic work from many guests, and now again through Proclus, filled her with anxiety.

He had succeeded, it was said, in attracting attention, and his great talent was beyond question; but in this age, to which beauty was as much one of the necessities of life as bread and wine, and which could not separate it from art, he ventured to deny it recognition. He headed a current in art which was striving to destroy what had been proved and acknowledged, yet, though his creations were undeniably powerful, and even showed many other admirable qualities, instead of pleasing, satisfying, and ennobling, they repelled.

These opinions had troubled the matron, who understood men, and was the more disposed to credit them the more distinctly she perceived traces of discontent and instability in Hermon's manner during the present meeting.

So it afforded her special pleasure to learn

from Myrtilus his firm conviction that, in Arachne, Hermon would produce a masterpiece which could scarcely be excelled.

During this conversation Althea had come to Thyone's side, and, as Hermon had already spoken to her of the Arachne, she eagerly expressed her belief that this work seemed as if it were specially created for him.

The Greek matron leaned back comfortably upon her cushions, her wrinkled, owl-like face assumed a cheerful expression, and, with the easy confidence conferred by aristocratic birth, a distinguished social position, and a light heart, she exclaimed: "Lucifer is probably already behind yonder clouds, preparing to announce day, and this exquisite banquet ought to have a close worthy of it. What do you say, you wonder-working darling of the Muses"—she held out her hand to Althea as she spoke—"to showing us and the two competing artists yonder the model of the Arachne they are to represent in gold and ivory?"

Althea fixed her eyes upon the ground, and, after a short period of reflection, answered hesitatingly: "The task which you set before me is certainly no easy one, but I shall rely upon your indulgence."

"She will!" cried the matron to the others.

Then, clapping her hands, she continued gaily, in the tone of the director of an entertainment issuing invitations to a performance: "Your attention is requested! In this city of weavers the noble Thracian, Althea, will depict before you all the weaver of weavers, Arachne, in person."

"Take heed and follow my advice to sharpen your eyes," added Philotas, who, conscious of his inferiority in intellect and talents to the men and women assembled here, took advantage of this opportunity to assert himself in a manner suited to his aristocratic birth. "This artistic yet hapless Arachne, if any one, teaches the lesson how the lofty Olympians punish those who venture to place themselves on the same level; so let artists beware. We stepchildren of the Muse can lull ourselves comfortably in the assurance of not giving the jealous gods the slightest cause for the doom which overtook the pitiable weaver."

Not a word of this declaration of the Macedonian aristocrat escaped the listening Ledscha.

Scales seemed to fall from her eyes. Hermon had won her love in order to use her for the model of his statue of Arachne, and, now that he had met Althea, who perhaps suited his purpose even better, he no longer needed the barbarian. He had cast her aside like a tight shoe

as soon as he found a more acceptable one in this female juggler.

The girl had already asked herself, with a slight thrill of horror, whether she had not prematurely called down so terrible a punishment upon her lover; now she rejoiced in her swift action. If anything else remained for her to do, it was to make the vengeance with which she intended to requite him still more severe.

There he stood beside the woman she hated.

Could he bestow even one poor thought upon the Biamite girl and the wrong he had inflicted?

Oh, no! His heart was filled to overflowing by the Greek—every look revealed it.

What was the shameless creature probably whispering to him now?

Perhaps a meeting was just being granted. The rapture which had been predicted to her for this moonlight night, and of which Hermon had robbed her, was mirrored in his features. He could think of everything except her and her poor, crushed heart.

But Ledscha was mistaken. Althea had asked the sculptor whether he still regretted having been detained by her before midnight, and he had confessed that his remaining at the banquet had been connected with a great sacri-

fice—nay, with an offence which weighed heavily on his mind. Yet he was grateful to the favour of the gods that had guided his decision, for Althea had it in her power to compensate him richly for what he had lost.

A glance full of promise flashed upon him from her eloquent eyes, and, turning toward the pedestal at the same instant, she asked softly, "Is the compensation I must and will bestow connected with the Arachne?"

An eager "Yes" confirmed this question, and a swift movement of her expressive lips showed him that his boldest anticipations were to be surpassed.

How gladly he would have detained her longer!—but she was already the object of all eyes, and his, too, followed her in expectant suspense as she gave an order to the female attendant and then stood thoughtfully for some time before the platform.

When she at last ascended it, the spectators supposed that she would again use a cloth; but, instead of asking anything more from the assistants, she cast aside even the peplos that covered her shoulders.

Now, almost lean in her slenderness, she stood with downcast eyes; but suddenly she loosed the double chain, adorned with flashing

gems, from her neck, the circlets from her upper arms and wrists, and, lastly, even the diadem, a gift bestowed by her relative, Queen Arsinoë, from her narrow brow.

The female slaves received them, and then with swift movements Althea divided her thick long tresses of red hair into narrower strands, which she flung over her back, bosom, and shoulders.

Next, as if delirious, she threw her head so far on one side that it almost touched her left shoulder, and stared wildly upward toward the right, at the same time raising her bare arms so high that they extended far above her head.

It was again her purpose to present the appearance of defending herself against a viewless power, yet she was wholly unlike the Niobe whom she had formerly personated, for not only anguish, horror, and defiance, but deep despair and inexpressible astonishment were portrayed by her features, which obediently expressed the slightest emotion.

Something unprecedented, incomprehensible even to herself, was occurring, and to Ledscha, who watched her with an expectation as passionate as if her own weal and woe depended upon Althea's every movement, it seemed as if an unintelligible marvel was happening before her

eyes, and a still greater one was impending; for was the woman up there really a woman like herself and the others whose eyes were now fixed upon the hated actress no less intently than her own?

Did her keen senses deceive her, or was not what was occurring actually a mysterious transformation?

As Althea stood there, her delicate arms seemed to have lengthened and lost even their slight roundness, her figure to have become even more slender and incorporeal, and how strangely her thin fingers spread apart! How stiffly the strands of the parted, wholly uncurled locks stood out in the air!

Did it not seem as if they were to help her move?

The black shadow which Althea's figure and limbs cast upon the surface of the brightly lighted pedestal—no, it was no deception, it not only *resembled* the spinner among insects, it presented the exact picture of a spider.

The Greek's slender body had contracted, her delicate arms and narrow braids of hair changed into spider legs, and the many-jointed hands were already grasping for their prey like a spider, or preparing to wind the murderous threads around another living creature.

"Arachne, the spider!" fell almost inaudibly from her quivering lips, and, overpowered by torturing fear, she was already turning away from the frightful image, when the storm of applause which burst from the Alexandrian guests soothed her excited imagination.

Instead of the spider, a slender, lank woman, with long, outstretched bare arms, and fingers spread wide apart, fluttering hair, and wandering eyes again stood before Ledscha.

But no peace was yet granted to her throbbing heart, for while Althea, with perspiring brow and quivering lips, descended from the pedestal, and was received with loud demonstrations of astonishment and delight, the glare of a flash of lightning burst through the clouds, and a loud peal of thunder shook the night air and reverberated a long time over the water.

At the same instant a loud cry rang from beneath the canopy.

Thyone, the wife of Alexander the Great's comrade, though absolutely fearless in the presence of human foes, dreaded the thunder by which Zeus announced his anger. Seized with sudden terror, she commanded a slave to obtain a black lamb for a sacrifice, and earnestly entreated her husband and her other companions to go on board the ship with her and seek shel-

ter in its safe, rain-proof cabin, for already heavy drops were beginning to fall upon the tensely drawn awning.

"Nemesis!" exclaimed the grammateus.

"Nemesis!" whispered young Philotas to Daphne in a confidential murmur, throwing his own costly purple cloak around her to shield her from the rain. "Nowhere that we mortals overstep the bounds allotted to us do we await her in vain."

Then bending down to her again, he added, by way of explanation: "The winged daughter of Night would prove herself negligent if she allowed me to enjoy wholly without drawback the overwhelming happiness of being with you once more."

"Nemesis!" remarked Thoas, an aristocratic young hipparch of the guards of the Diadochi, who had studied in Athens and belonged to the Peripatetics there. "The master sees in the figure of this goddess the indignation which the good fortune of the base or the unworthy use of good fortune inspires in us. She keeps the happy mean between envy and malicious satisfaction."

The young soldier looked around him, expecting applause, but no one was listening; the tempest was spreading terror among most of the freedmen and slaves.

Philotas and Myrtilus were following Daphne and her companion Chrysilla as they hurried into the tent. The deep, commanding tones of old Philippus vainly shouted the name of Althea, whom, as he had bestowed his hospitality upon her in Pelusium, he regarded as his charge, while at intervals he reprimanded the black slaves who were to carry his wife to the ship, but at another heavy peal of thunder set down the litter to throw themselves on their knees and beseech the angry god for mercy.

Gras, the steward whom Archias had given to his daughter, a Bithynian who had attached himself to one school of philosophy after another, and thereby ceased to believe in the power of the Olympians, lost his quiet composure in this confusion, and even his usual good nature deserted him. With harsh words, and no less harsh blows, he rushed upon the servants, who, instead of carrying the costly household utensils and embroidered cushions into the tent, drew out their amulets and idols to confide their own imperilled lives to the protection of higher powers.

Meanwhile the gusts of wind which accompanied the outbreak of the storm extinguished the lamps and pitch-pans. The awning was torn from the posts, and amid the wild confusion

rang the commandant of Pelusium's shouts for Althea and the screams of two Egyptian slave women, who, with their foreheads pressed to the ground, were praying, while the angry Gras was trying, by kicks and blows, to compel them to rise and go to work.

The officers were holding a whispered consultation whether they should accept the invitation of Proclus and spend the short remnant of the night on his galley over the wine, or first, according to the counsel of their pious commandant, wait in the neighbouring temple of Zeus until the storm was over.

The tempest had completely scattered Daphne's guests. Even Ledscha glanced very rarely toward the tents. She had thrown herself on the ground under the sycamore to beseech the angry deity for mercy, but, deeply as fear moved her agitated soul, she could not pray, but listened anxiously whenever an unexpected noise came from the meeting place of the Greeks.

Then the tones of a familiar voice reached her. It was Hermon's, and the person to whom he was speaking could be no one but the uncanny spider-woman, Althea.

They were coming to have a secret conversation under the shade of the dense foliage

of the sycamore. That was easily perceived, and in an instant Ledscha's fear yielded to a different feeling.

Holding her breath, she nestled close to the trunk of the ancient tree to listen, and the first word she heard was the name "Nemesis," which had just reached her from the tent.

She knew its meaning, for Tennis also had a little temple dedicated to the terrible goddess, which was visited by the Egyptians and Biamites as well as the Greeks.

A triumphant smile flitted over her unveiled features, for there was no other divinity on whose aid she could more confidently rely. She could unchain the vengeance which threatened Hermon with a far more terrible danger than the thunder clouds above, under the protection —nay, as it were at the behest—of Nemesis.

To-morrow she would be the first to anoint her altar.

Now she rejoiced that her wealthy father imposed no restriction upon her in the management of household affairs, for she need spare no expense in choosing the animal she intended to offer as a sacrifice.

This reflection flashed through her mind with the speed of lightning while she was listening to Althea's conversation with the sculptor.

"The question here can be no clever play upon the name and the nature of the daughter of Erebus and Night," said the Thracian gravely. "I will remind you that there is another Nemesis besides the just being who drives from his stolen ease the unworthy mortal who suns himself in good fortune. The Nemesis whom I will recall to-day, while angry Zeus is hurling his thunderbolts, is the other, who chastises sacrilege—Ate, the swiftest and most terrible of the Erinyes. I will invoke her wrath upon you in this hour if you do not confess the truth to me fully and entirely."

"Ask," Hermon interrupted in a hollow tone. "Only, you strange woman——"

"Only," she hastily broke in, "whatever the answer may be, I must pose to you as the model for your Arachne—and perhaps it may come to that—but first I must know, briefly and quickly, for they will be looking for me immediately. Do you love Daphne?"

"No," he answered positively. "True, she has been dear to me from childhood——"

"And," Althea added, completing the sentence, "you owe her father a debt of gratitude. But that is not new to me; I know also how little reason you gave her for loving you. Yet her heart belongs neither to Philotas, the great lord

with the little brain, nor to the famous sculptor Myrtilus, whose body is really too delicate to bear all the laurels with which he is overloaded, but to you, and you alone—I know it."

Hermon tried to contradict her, but Althea, without allowing him to speak, went on hurriedly: "No matter! I wished to know whether you loved her. True, according to appearances, your heart does not glow for her, and hitherto you have disdained to transform by her aid, at a single stroke, the poverty which ill suits you into wealth. But it was not merely to speak of the daughter of Archias that I accompanied you into this tempest, from which I would fain escape as quickly as possible. So speak quickly. I am to serve you in your art, and yet, if I understood you correctly, you have already found here another excellent model."

"A native of the country," answered Hermon in an embarrassed tone.

"And for my sake you allowed her to wait for you in vain?"

"It is as you say."

"And you had promised to seek her?"

"Certainly; but before the appointed hour came I met you. You rose before me like a new sun, shedding a new light that was full of promise. Everything else sank into darkness,

and, if you will fulfil the hope which you awakened in this heart——"

Just at that moment another flash of lightning blazed, and, while the thunder still shook the air, Althea continued his interrupted protestation: "Then you will give yourself to me, body and soul—but Zeus, who hears oaths, is reminding us of his presence—and what will await you if the Biamite whom you betrayed invokes the wrath of Nemesis against you?"

"The Nemesis of the barbarians!" he retorted contemptuously. "She only placed herself at the service of my art reluctantly; but you, Althea, if you will loan yourself to me as a model, I shall succeed in doing my very best; for you have just permitted me to behold a miracle, Arachne herself, whom you became, you enchantress. It was real, actual life, and that—that is the highest goal."

"The highest?" she asked hesitatingly. "You will have to represent the female form, and beauty, Hermon, beauty?"

"Will be there, allied with truth," flamed Hermon, "if you, you peerless, more than beautiful creature, keep your word to me. But you will! Let me be sure of it. Is a little love also blended with the wish to serve the artist?"

"A little love?" she repeated scornfully.

"This matter concerns love complete and full—or none. We will see each other again to-morrow. Then show me what the model Althea is worth to you."

With these words she vanished in the darkness, while the call of her name again rang from the tents.

"Althea!" he cried in a tone of mournful reproach as he perceived her disappearance, hurrying after her; but the dense gloom soon forced him to give up the pursuit.

Ledscha, too, left her place beneath the sycamore.

She had seen and heard enough.

Duty now commanded her to execute vengeance, and the bold Hanno was ready to risk his life for her.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE following day the sun shone radiantly, with scorching brilliancy, upon Tennis and the archipelago, which at this season of the year surrounded the little city of weavers.

Young Philotas, without going to rest, had set out at dawn in pursuit of game, accompanied by a numerous hunting party, to which several of the Pelusinian officers belonged. He, too, had brought home a great quantity of booty, with which he had expected to awaken Daphne's admiration, and to lay as a token of homage at her feet. He had intended to lead before her garlanded slaves bearing, tied by ropes, bunches of slaughtered wild fowl, but his reception was very different from what he had anticipated.

Instead of praising his exploit, he had been indignantly requested to remove the poor, easily killed victims from her presence; and, wounded and disappointed, he had retired to his magnificent Nile boat, where, spent by his sleepless

night, he slumbered so soundly on his soft cushions that he did not appear at the breakfast which the gray-haired commander of Pelusium had invited him to attend on his galley.

While the others were still feasting there, Daphne was enjoying an hour alone with her companion Chrysilla.

She had remained absent from Philippus's banquet, and her pale cheeks showed the ill effects produced by the excitement of the previous night.

A little before noon Hermon came to see her. He, too, had not gone to the Pelusinian's breakfast.

After Althea had left him the evening before he went directly back to the white house, and, instead of going to rest, devoted himself to Myrtilus; for the difficulty of breathing, which during his industrious life in quiet seclusion had not troubled him for several months, attacked him with twofold violence after the gaiety of the previous night. Hermon had not left him an instant until day brought the sufferer relief, and he no longer needed the supporting hand of his kind nurse.

While Hermon, in his own sleeping room, ordered Bias to anoint his hair and beard and put on festal garments, the slave told him certain

things that destroyed the last remnant of composure in his easily agitated soul.

With the firm resolution to keep the appointment on Pelican Island, Hermon had gone at sunset, in response to the Alexandrian's invitation, to attend her banquet, and by no means unwillingly, for his parents' old friends were dear to him, and he knew by experience the beneficial influence Daphne's sunny, warm-hearted nature exerted upon him.

Yet this time he did not find what he expected.

In the first place, he had been obliged to witness how earnestly Philotas was pressing his suit, and perceived that her companion Chrysilla was most eagerly assisting him. As she saw in the young aristocrat a suitable husband for the daughter of Archias, and it was her duty to assign the guests their seats at the banquet, she had given the cushion beside Daphne to Philotas, and also willingly fulfilled Althea's desire to have Hermon for her neighbour.

When Chrysilla presented the black-bearded artist to the Thracian, she would have sworn that Althea found an old acquaintance in the sculptor; but Hermon treated the far-famed relative of Queen Arsinoë as coldly and distantly

as if he now saw her for the first time, and with little pleasure.

In truth, he was glad to avoid women of Althea's stamp. For some time he had preferred to associate with the common people, among whom he found his best subjects, and kept far aloof from the court circles to which Althea belonged, and which, thanks to his birth and his ability as an artist, would easily have been accessible to him also.

The over-refined women who gave themselves airs of avoiding everything which imposes a restraint upon Nature, and therefore, in their transparent robes, treated with contempt all that modest Macedonian dames deemed worthy of a genuine woman's consideration, were repulsive to him—perhaps because they formed so rude a contrast to his noble dead mother and to Daphne.

Although he had been very frequently in feminine society, Althea's manner at first caused him a certain degree of embarrassment; for, in spite of the fact that he believed he met her here for the first time, there was something familiar about her, especially in the tone of her voice, and he fancied that her first words were associated with some former ones.

Yet no! If he had ever met her, he would surely have remembered her red-gold hair and

the other peculiarities of a personality which was remarkable in every respect.

It soon proved that they were total strangers, and he wished matters to remain so.

He was glad that she attracted him so little, for at least she would scarcely make the early departure to the Biamite, which he considered his duty, a difficult task.

True, he admired from the first the rare milk-white hue of her delicate skin, which was wholly free from rouge—his artist eye perceived that—and the wonderfully beautiful shape of her hands and feet. The pose of the head on the neck, too, as she turned toward him seemed remarkably fine. This slender, pliant woman would have been an admirable model!

Again and again she reminded him of a gay Lesbian with whom he had caroused for a night during the last Dionysia in Alexandria, yet, on closer inspection, the two were as different as possible.

The former had been as free and reckless in her conduct as Althea was reserved. The hair and eyebrows of the Lesbian, instead of reddish gold, were the deepest black, and her complexion—he remembered it perfectly—was much darker. The resemblance probably consisted merely in the shape of the somewhat too nar-

row face, with its absolutely straight nose, and a chin which was rather too small, as well as in the sound of the high voice.

Not a serious word had reached his ears from the wanton lips of the Lesbian, while Althea at once desired information concerning his art, and showed that she was thoroughly familiar with the works and the aspirations of the Alexandrian sculptors. Although aware that Hermon had begun his career as an artist, and was the leader of a new tendency, she pretended to belong to the old school, and thereby irritated him to contradiction and the explanation of his efforts, which were rooted in the demands of the present day and the life of the flourishing capital.

The Thracian listened to the description of the new art struggling to present truth, as if these things were welcome surprises, grand revelations, for which she had waited with eager longing. True, she opposed every statement hostile to the old beliefs; but her extremely expressive features soon betrayed to him that he was stirring her to reflect, shaking her opinions, and winning her to his side.

Already, for the sake of the good cause, he devoted himself with the utmost zeal to the task of convincing Althea; she, however, did not

make it an easy one, but presented clever arguments against his assertions.

Whenever he or she, by way of example, mentioned any well-known work of art, she imitated, as if involuntarily, its pose and action with surprising fidelity, frequently also in admirable caricature, whose effect was extremely comical.

What a woman!

She was familiar with whatever Grecian art had created, and the animated conversation became a bewitching spectacle. When the grammateus Proclus, who as Althea's travelling companion had a certain claim upon her attention, mingled for a while in the discussion and attracted Althea's notice, Hermon felt injured, and answered his sensible remarks with such rudeness that the elder man, whose social position was so much higher, angrily turned his back upon him.

Althea had imposed a certain degree of restraint upon herself while talking to the grammateus, but during the further conversation with Hermon she confessed that she was decidedly of his opinion, and added to the old reasons for the deposition of beauty and ideality in favour of truth and reality new ones which surprised the sculptor. When she at last offered him her hand for a firm alliance, his brain was fevered,

and it seemed a great honour when she asked eagerly what would occupy him in the immediate future.

Passionate sympathy echoed in every word, was expressed in every feature, and she listened as if a great happiness was in store for herself when he disclosed the hopes which he based upon the statue of Arachne.

True, as time passed he had spoken more than once of the necessity of retiring, and before midnight really tried to depart ; but he had fallen under Althea's thrall, and, in reply to her inquiry what must shorten these exquisite hours, had informed her, in significant words, what drew him away, and that his delay threatened him with the loss of a model such as the favour of fate rarely bestowed upon an artist.

Now the Thracian for the first time permitted her eyes to make frank confessions. She also bent forward with a natural movement to examine the artistic work on a silver vase, and as while doing so her peplos fell over his hand, she pressed it tenderly.

He gazed ardently up at her; but she whispered softly: "Stay! You will gain through me something better than awaits you there, and not only for to-day and to-morrow. We shall

meet again in Alexandria, and to serve your art there shall be a beloved duty."

His power of resistance was broken; yet he beckoned to his slave Bias, who was busied with the mixing jars, and ordered him to seek Ledscha and tell her not to wait longer; urgent duties detained him.

While he was giving this direction, Althea had become engaged in the gay conversation of the others, and, as Thyone called Hermon, and he was also obliged to speak to Daphne, he could not again obtain an opportunity for private talk with the wonderful woman who held out far grander prospects for his art than the refractory, rude Biamite maiden.

Soon Althea's performance seemed to prove how fortunate a choice he had made. Her Arachne appeared like a revelation to him. If she kept her promise, and he succeeded in modelling her in the pose assumed while imagining the process of transformation, and presented her idea to the spectators, the great success which hitherto—because he had not yielded to demands which were opposed to his convictions—he had vainly expected, could no longer escape him. The Alexandrian fellow-artists who belonged to his party would gratefully welcome this special work; for what grew out of it would have noth-

ing in common with the fascination of superhuman beauty, by which the older artists ensnared the hearts and minds of the multitude. He would create a genuine woman, who would not lack defects, yet who, though she inspired neither gratification nor rapture, would touch, perhaps even thrill, the heart by absolute truth.

While Althea was standing on the pedestal, she had not only represented the transformation into the spider, but experienced it, and the features of the spectators revealed that they believed they were witnessing the sinister event. His aim was now to awaken the same feeling in the beholders of his Arachne. Nothing, nothing at all must be changed in the figure of the model, in which many might miss the roundness and plumpness so pleasing to the eye. Althea's very defects would perfect the figure of the restless, wretched weaver whom Athene transformed into the spider.

While devoting himself to nursing his friend, he had thought far less of the new love-happiness which, in spite of her swift flight, was probably awaiting him through Althea than of the work which was to fill his existence in the immediate future.

His healthy body, steeled in the palæstra, felt no fatigue after the sleepless night passed

amid so many powerful excitements when he retired to his chamber and committed himself to the hands of his slave.

It had not been possible to hear his report before, but when he at last received it Hermon was to learn something extremely unpleasant, and not only because no word of apology or even explanation of his absence had reached Ledscha.

Bias was little to blame for this neglect, for, in the first place, he had found no boat to reach the Pelican Island, because half Tennis was on the road to Tanis, where, on the night of the full moon, the brilliant festivals of the full eye of Horus and the great Astarte were celebrated by the mixed population of this place. When a boat which belonged to Daphne's galley was finally given to him, the Biamite girl was no longer at the place appointed for the meeting.

Hoping to find her on the Owl's Nest with old Tabus, he then landed there, but had been so uncivilly rebuffed on the shore by a rough fellow that he might be glad to have escaped with sound limbs. Lastly, he stole to Ledscha's home, and, knowing that her father was absent, had ventured as far as the open courtyard in the centre of the stately dwelling. The dogs knew him, and as a light was shining from one

of the rooms that opened upon the courtyard, he peeped in and saw Taus, Ledscha's younger sister. She was kneeling before the statue of a god at the back of the room, weeping, while the old housekeeper had fallen asleep with the distaff in her lap.

He called cautiously to the pretty child. She was awaiting the return of her sister, who, she supposed, was still detained on the Owl's Nest by old Tabus's predictions; she had sorrowful tidings for her.

The husband of her friend Gula had returned on his ship and learned that his wife had gone to the Greek's studio. He had raged like a madman, and turned the unfortunate woman pitilessly out of doors after sunset. Her own parents had only been induced to receive her with great difficulty. Paseth, the jealous husband, had spared her life and refrained from going at once to kill the artist solely because Hermon had saved his little daughter at his own peril from the burning house.

"Now," said Ledscha's pretty little sister, "it would also be known that she had gone with Gula to his master, who was certainly a handsome man, but for whom, now that young Smethis was wooing her, she cared no more than she did for her runaway cat. All Tennis

would point at her, and she dared not even think what her father would do when he came home."

These communications had increased Hermon's anxiety.

He was a brave man, and did not fear the vengeance of the enraged husband, against whom he was conscious of no guilt except having persuaded his wife to commit an imprudence. What troubled him was only the consciousness that he had given her and innocent little Taus every reason to curse their meeting.

The ardent warmth with which Gula blessed him as the preserver of her child had given him infinite pleasure. Now it seemed as if he had been guilty of an act of baseness by inducing her to render a service which was by no means free from danger, as though he wished to be paid for a good deed.

Besides, the slave had represented the possible consequences of his imprudence in the most gloomy light, and, with the assurance of knowing the disposition of his fellow-countrymen, urged his master to leave Tennis at once; the other Biamite men, who would bear anything rather than the interference of a Greek in their married lives, might force Gula's husband to take vengeance on him.

He said nothing about anxiety concerning his own safety, but he had good reason to fear being regarded as a go-between and called to account for it.

But his warnings and entreaties seemed to find deaf ears in Hermon. True, he intended to leave Tennis as soon as possible, for what advantage could he now find here? First, however, he must attend to the packing of the statues, and then try to appease Ledscha, and make Gula's husband understand that he was casting off his pretty wife unjustly.

He would not think of making a hasty departure, he told the slave, especially as he was to meet Althea, Queen Arsinoë's art-appreciating relative, in whom he had gained a friend, later in Alexandria.

Then Bias informed him of a discovery to which one of the Thracian's slave women had helped him, and what he carelessly told his master drove the blood from his cheeks, and, though his voice was almost stifled by surprise and shame, made him assail him with questions.

What great thing had he revealed? There had been reckless gaiety at every festival of Dionysus since he had been in the artist's service, and the slaves had indulged in the festal mirth no less freely than the masters. To in-

toxicate themselves with wine, the gift of the god to whom they were paying homage, was not only permitted, but commanded, and the juice of the grape proved its all-equalizing power.

There had been no lack of pretty companions even for him, the bondman, and the most beautiful of all had made eyes at his master, the tall, slender man with the splendid black beard.

The reckless Lesbian who had favoured Hermon at the last Dionysia had played pranks with him madly enough, but then had suddenly vanished. By his master's orders Bias had tried to find her again, but, in spite of honest search, in vain.

Just now he had met, as Althea's maid, the little Syrian Margula, who had been in her company, and raced along in the procession of bacchanals in his, Bias's, arms. True, she could not be persuaded to make a frank confession, but he, Bias, would let his right hand wither if Hermon's companion at the Dionysia was any other than Althea. His master would own that he was right if he imagined her with black hair instead of red. Plenty of people in Alexandria practised the art of dyeing, and it was well known that Queen Arsinoë herself willingly mingled in the throng at the Dionysia with a

handsome Ephebi, who did not suspect the identity of his companion.

This was the information which had so deeply agitated Hermon, and then led him, after pacing to and fro a short time, to go first to Myrtilus and then to Daphne.

He had found his friend sleeping, and though every fibre of his being urged him to speak to him, he forced himself to leave the sufferer undisturbed.

Yet so torturing a sense of dissatisfaction with himself, so keen a resentment against his own adverse destiny had awaked within him, that he could no longer endure to remain in the presence of his work, with which he was more and more dissatisfied.

Away from the studio!

There was a gay party on board the galley of his parents' old friends. Wine should bring him forgetfulness, too, bless him again with the sense of joyous existence which he knew so well, and which he now seemed on the point of losing.

When he had once talked and drunk himself into the right mood, life would wear a less gloomy face.

No! It should once more be a gay and reckless one!

And Althea?

He would meet her, with whom he had once caroused and revelled madly enough in the intoxication of the last Dionysia, and, instead of allowing himself to be fooled any longer and continuing to bow respectfully before her, would assert all the rights she had formerly so liberally granted.

He would enjoy to-day, forget to-morrow, and be gay with the gay.

Eager for new pleasure, he drew a long breath as he went out into the open air, pressed his hands upon his broad chest, and with his eyes fixed upon the commandant of Pelusium's galley, bedecked with flags, walked swiftly toward the landing place.

Suddenly from the deck, shaded by an awning, the loud laugh of a woman's shrill voice reached his ear, blended with the deeper tones of the grammateus, whose attacks on the previous night Hermon had not forgotten.

He stopped as if the laugh had pierced him to the heart. Proclus appeared to be on the most familiar terms with Althea, and to meet him with the Thracian now seemed impossible. He longed for mirth and pleasure, but was unwilling to share it with these two. As he dared not disturb Myrtilus, there was only one place

where he could find what he needed, and this was—he had said so to himself when he turned his back on his sleeping friend—in Daphne's society.

Only yesterday he would have sought her without a second thought, but to-day Althea's declaration that he was the only man whom the daughter of Archias loved stood between him and his friend.

He knew that from childhood she had watched his every step with sisterly affection. A hundred times she had proved her loyalty; yet, dear as she was to him, willingly as he would have risked his life to save her from a danger, it had never entered his mind to give the tie that united them the name of love.

An older relative of both in Alexandria had once advised him, when he was complaining of his poverty, to seek her hand, but his pride of manhood rebelled against having the wealth which fate denied flung into his lap by a woman. When she looked at him with her honest eyes, he could never have brought himself to feign anything, least of all a passion of which, tenderly attached to her though he had been for years, hitherto he had known nothing.

"Do you love her?" Hermon asked himself as he walked toward Daphne's tent, and the

anticipated "No" had pressed itself upon him far less quickly than he expected.

One thing was undeniably certain: whoever won her for a wife—even though she were the poorest of the poor—must be numbered among the most enviable of men. And should he not recognise in his aversion to every one of her suitors, and now to the aristocratic young Philotas, a feeling which resembled jealousy?

No! He did not and would not love Daphne.

If she were really his, and whatever concerned him had become hers, with whom could he have sought in hours like these soothing, kind, and sensible counsel, comfort that calmed the heart, and the refreshing dew which his fading courage and faltering creative power required?

The bare thought of touching clay and wax with his fingers, or taking hammer, chisel, and file in his hands, was now repulsive; and when, just outside of the tent, a Biamite woman who was bringing fish to the cook reminded him of Ledscha, and that he had lost in her the right model for his Arachne, he scarcely regretted it.

CHAPTER XIV.

Outside the door of the tent Hermon was trying to banish Althea's image from his mind. How foolishly he had overestimated last night the value of this miserable actress, who as a woman had lost all charm for him—even as a model for his Arachne!

He would rather have appeared before his pure friend with unsightly stains on his robe than while mastered by yearning for the Thracian.

The first glance at Daphne's beloved face, the first words of her greeting, taught him that he should find with her everything for which he longed.

In simple, truthful words she reproached him for having neglected her to the verge of incivility the evening before, but there was no trace of bitterness or resentment in the accusation, and she gave Hermon little time for apology, but quickly gladdened him with words of forgiveness.

In the opinion of her companion Chrysilla, Daphne ought to have kept the capricious artist waiting much longer for pardon. True, the cautious woman took no part in the conversation afterward, but she kept her charge in sight while she was skilfully knotting the fringe into a cloth which she had woven herself. On account of her favourite Philotas, it was well for Daphne to be aware that she was watched.

Chrysilla was acquainted with life, and knew that Eros never mingles more arbitrarily in the intercourse of a young couple than when, after a long separation, there is anything whatever to forgive.

Besides, many words which the two exchanged escaped her hearing, for they talked in low tones, and it was hot in the tent. Often the fatigue she felt after the sleepless night bowed her head, still comely with its unwrinkled face, though she was no longer young; then she quickly raised it again.

Neither Daphne nor Hermon noticed her.

The former at once perceived that something was weighing on the sculptor's mind, but he did not need any long inquiry. He had come to confide his troubles to her, and she kindly lightened the task for him by asking why he had not gone to breakfast with the Pelusinians.

"Because I am not fit for gay company to-day," was the reply.

"Again dissatisfied with Fate?"

"True, it has given me small cause for contentment of late."

"Put in place of Fate the far-seeing care of the gods, and you will accept what befalls you less unkindly."

"Let us stick to us mortals, I entreat you."

"Very well, then. Your Demeter does not fully satisfy you."

A discontented shrug of the shoulders was the reply.

"Then work with twofold zeal upon the Arachne."

"Although one model I hoped to obtain forsook me, and my soul is estranged from the other."

"Althea?" she asked eagerly, and he nodded assent.

Daphne clapped her hands joyfully, exclaiming so loudly that Chrysilla's head sprang up with a jerk. "It could not help being so! O Hermon! how anxious I have been! Now, I thought, when this horrible woman represented the transformation into the spider with such repulsive accuracy, Hermon will believe that this is the true, and therefore the right, ideal; nay,

I was deceived myself while gazing. But, eternal gods! as soon as I imagined this Arachne in marble or chryselephantine work, what a painful feeling overpowered me!"

"Of course!" he replied in an irritated tone. "The thirst for beauty, to which you all succumb, would not have much satisfaction to expect from this work."

"No, no, no!" Daphne interrupted in a louder tone than usual, and with the earnest desire to convince him. "Precisely because I transported myself into your tendency, your aspirations, I recognised the danger. O Hermon! what produced so sinister an effect by the wavering light of the lamps and torches, while the thunderstorm was rising—the strands of hair, the outspread fingers, the bewildered, staring blue eyes—do you not feel yourself how artificial, how unnatural it all was? This transformation was only a clever trick of acting, nothing more. Before a quiet spectator, in the pure, truthful light of Apollo, the foe of all deception, what would this Arachne probably become? Even now—I have already said so—when I imagine her executed in marble or in gold and ivory! Beauty? Who would expect to find in the active, constantly toiling weaver, the mortal daughter of an industrious dyer in pur-

ple, the calm, refreshing charm of divine women? I at least am neither foolish nor unjust enough to do so. The degree of beauty Althea possesses would entirely satisfy me for the Arachne. But when I imagine a plastic work faithful to the model of yesterday evening—though I have seen a great deal with my own eyes, and am always ready to defer to riper judgment—I would think, while looking at it: This statue came to the artist from the stage, but never from Nature. Such would be my view, and I am not one of the initiated. But the adepts! The King, with his thorough connoisseurship and fine taste, my father, and the other famous judges, how much more keenly they would perceive and define it!"

Here she hesitated, for the blood had left Hermon's cheeks, and she saw with surprise the deep impression which the candid expression of her opinion had produced upon the artist, usually so independent and disposed to contradiction. Her judgment had undoubtedly disturbed, nay, perhaps convinced him; but at the same time his features revealed such deep depression that, far from rejoicing in so rare a success, she patted his arm like an affectionate sister, saying: "You have not yet found time to realize calmly what yesterday dazzled us all—and you," she added in a lower tone, "the most strongly."

"But now," he murmured sadly, half to himself, half to her, "my vision is doubly clear. Close before the success of which I dreamed failure and bitter disappointment."

"If this 'doubly' refers to your completed work, and also to the Arachne," cried Daphne in the affectionate desire to soothe him, "a pleasant surprise will perhaps soon await you, for Myrtilus judges your Demeter much more favourably than you yourself do, and he also betrayed to me whom it resembles."

She blushed slightly as she spoke, and, as her companion's gloomy face brightened for a short time, went on eagerly: "And now for the Arachne. You will and must succeed in what you so ardently strive to accomplish, a subject so exactly adapted to your magnificent virile genius and so strangely suited to the course which your art has once entered upon. And you can not fail to secure the right model. You had not found it in Althea, no, certainly not! O Hermon! if I could only make you see clearly how ill suited she, in whom everything is false, is to you—your art, your only too powerful strength, your aspiration after truth——"

"You hate her," he broke in here in a repellent tone; but Daphne dropped her quiet composure, and her gray eyes, usually so gentle,

flashed fiercely as she exclaimed: "Yes, and again yes! From my inmost soul I do, and I rejoice in it. I have long disliked her, but since yesterday I abhor her like the spider which she can simulate, like snakes and toads, falsehood and vice."

Hermon had never seen his uncle's peaceful daughter in this mood. The emotions that rendered this kindly soul so unlike itself could only be the one powerful couple, love and jealousy; and while gazing intently at her face, which in this moment seemed to him as beautiful as Pallas Athene armed for battle, he listened breathlessly as she continued: "Already the murderous spider had half entangled you in her net. She drew you out into the tempest—our steward Gras saw it—in order, while Zeus was raging, to deliver you to the wrath of the other gods also and the contempt of all good men; for whoever yields himself to her she destroys, sucks the marrow from his bones like the greedy harpies, and all that is noble from his soul."

"Why, Daphne," interrupted Chrysilla, raising herself from her cushions in alarm, "must I remind you of the moderation which distinguishes the Greeks from the barbarians, and especially the Hellenic woman——"

Here Daphne indignantly broke in: "Who-

ever practises moderation in the conflict against vice has already gone halfway over to evil. She utterly ruined—how long ago is it?—the unfortunate Menander, my poor Ismene's young husband. You know them both, Hermon. Here, of course, you scarcely heard how she lured him from his wife and the lovely little girl who bears my name. She tempted the poor fellow to her ship, only to cast him off at the end of a month for another. Now he is at home again, but he thinks Ismene is the statue from the Temple of Isis, which has gained life and speech; for he has lost his mind, and when I saw him I felt as if I should die of horror and pity. Now she is coming home with Proclus, and, as the way led through Pelusium, she attached herself to our friends and forces herself in here with them. What does she care about her elderly travelling companion? But you—yes, you, Hermon—are the next person whom she means to capture. Just now, when my eyes closed—— But no! It is not only in my dreams; the hideous gray threads which proceed from this greedy spider are continually floating before me and dim the light." Here she paused, for the maid Stephanion announced the coming of visitors, and at the same time loud voices were heard outside, and the merry party who had been attending the

breakfast given by the commandant of Pelusium entered the tent.

Althea was among the guests, but she took little notice of Hermon.

Proclus, her associate in Queen Arsinoë's favour, was again asserting his rights as her travelling companion, and she showed him plainly that the attention which he paid her was acceptable.

Meanwhile her eager, bright blue eyes were roving everywhere, and nothing that was passing around her escaped her notice.

As she greeted Daphne she perceived that her cheeks had flushed during her conversation with Hermon.

How reserved and embarrassed the sculptor's manner was now to his uncle's daughter, whom only yesterday he had treated with as much freedom as though she were his sister! What a bungler in dissimulation! how short-sighted was this big, strong man and remarkable artist! He had carried her, Althea, in his arms like a child for a whole quarter of an hour at the festival of Dionysus, and, in spite of the sculptor's keen eye, he did not recognise her again!

What would not dyes and a change of manner accomplish!

Or had the memory of those mad hours re-

vived and caused his embarrassment? If he should know that her companion, the Milesian Nanno, whom he had feasted with her on oyster pasties at Canopus after she had given the slip to her handsome young companion was Queen Arsinoë! Perhaps she would inform him of it some day if he recognised her.

Yet that could scarcely have happened. He had only been told what she betrayed to him yesterday, and was now neglecting her for Daphne's sake. That was undoubtedly the way the matter stood. How the girl's cheeks were glowing when she entered!

The obstacle that stood between her and Hermon was the daughter of Archias, and she, fool that she was, had attracted Hermon's attention to her.

No matter!

He would want her for the Arachne, and she needed only to stretch out her hand to draw him to her again if she found no better amusement in Alexandria. Now she would awaken his fears that the best of models would recall her favour.

Besides, it would not do to resume the pleasant game with him under the eyes of Philippus and his wife, who was a follower of the manners of old times. The right course now was to keep him until later.

Standing at Proclus's side, she took part gaily in the general conversation; but when Myrtilus and Philemon had joined the others, and Daphne had consented to go with Philippus and Thyone that evening, in order, after offering sacrifice together to Selene, to sail for Pelusium, Althea requested the grammateus to take her into the open air.

Before leaving the tent, however, she dropped her ostrich-feather fan as she passed Hermon, and, when he picked it up, whispered with a significant glance at Daphne, "I see that what was learned of her heart is turned to account promptly enough."

Then, laughing gaily, she continued loudly enough to be heard by her companion also: "Yesterday our young artist maintained that the Muse shunned abundance; but the works of his wealthy friend Myrtilus contradicted him, and he changed his view with the speed of lightning."

"Would that this swift alteration had concerned the direction of his art," replied Proclus in a tone audible to her alone.

Both left the tent as he spoke, and Hermon uttered a sigh of relief as he looked after them.

She attributed the basest motives to him, and Daphne's opinion of her was scarcely too severe.

He no longer needed to fear her power of attraction, though, now that he had seen her again, he better understood the spell which she had exerted over him. Every movement of her lithe figure had an exquisite grace, whose charm was soothing to the artist's eye. Only there was something piercing in her gaze when it did not woo love, and, while making the base charge, her extremely thin lips had showed her sharp teeth in a manner that reminded him of the way the she-wolf among the King's wild beasts in the Paneum gardens raised her lips when any one went near her cage.

Daphne was right. Ledscha would have been infinitely better as a model for the Arachne.

Everything in this proud creature was genuine and original, which was certainly not the case with Althea. Besides, stern austerity was as much a part of the Biamite as her hair and her hands, yet what ardent passion he had seen glow in her eyes! The model so long sought in vain he had found in Ledscha, who in so many respects resembled Arachne. Fool that he was to have yielded to a swift and false ebullition of feeling!

Since Myrtilus was again near him Hermon had devoted himself with fresh eagerness to his artistic task, while a voice within cried more

and more loudly that the success of his new work depended entirely upon Ledscha. He must try to regain her as a model for the Arachne! But while pondering over the "how," he felt a rare sense of pleasure when Daphne spoke to him or her glance met his.

At first he had devoted himself eagerly to his father's old friends, and especially to Thyone, and had not found it quite easy to remain firm when, in her frank, kindly, cordial manner, she tried to persuade him to accompany her and the others to Pelusium. Yet he had succeeded in refusing the worthy couple's invitation. But when he saw Philotas, whose resemblance to the King, his cousin, had just been mentioned by one of the officers, become more and more eager in his attentions to Daphne, and heard him also invited by Philippus to share the nocturnal voyage, he felt disturbed, and could not conceal from himself that the uneasiness which constantly obtained a greater mastery over him arose from the fear of losing his friend to the young aristocrat.

This was jealousy, and where it flamed so hotly love could scarcely be absent. Yet, had the shaft of Eros really struck him, how was it possible that the longing to win Ledscha back stirred so strongly within him that he finally reached a resolution concerning her?

As soon as the guests left Tennis he would approach the Biamite again. He had already whispered this intention to Myrtilus, when he heard Daphne's companion say to Thyone, "Philotas will accompany us, and on this voyage they will plight their troth if Aphrodite's powerful son accepts my sacrifice."

He involuntarily looked at the pair who were intended for each other, and saw Daphne lower her eyes, blushing, at a whisper from the young Macedonian.

His blood also crimsoned his cheeks, and when, soon after, he asked his friend whether she cared for his companionship, and Daphne assented in the most eager way, he said that he would share the voyage to Pelusium.

Daphne's eyes had never yet beamed upon him so gladly and graciously. Althea was right. She must love him, and it seemed as if this conviction awoke a new star of happiness in his troubled soul.

If Philotas imagined that he could pluck the daughter of Archias like a ripe fruit from a tree, he would find himself mistaken.

Hermon did not yet exactly understand himself, only he felt certain that it would be impossible to surrender Daphne to another, and that for her sake he would give up twenty Ledschas,

though he cherished infinitely great expectations from the Biamite for his art, which hitherto had been more to him than all else.

Everything that he still had to do in Tennis he could intrust to his conscientious Bias, to Myrtilus, and his slaves.

If he returned to the city of weavers, he would earnestly endeavour to palliate the offence which he had inflicted on Ledscha, and, if possible, obtain her forgiveness. Only one thing detained him—anxiety about his friend, who positively refused to share the night voyage.

He had promised his uncle Archias to care for him like a brother, and his own kind heart bade him stay with Myrtilus, and not leave him to the nursing of his very skilful but utterly unreliable body-servant, after the last night had proved to what severe attacks of his disease he was still liable.

Myrtilus, however, earnestly entreated him not to deprive himself on his account of a pleasure which he would gladly have shared. There was plenty of time to pack the statues. As for himself, nothing would do him more good just now than complete rest in his beloved solitude, which, as Hermon knew, was more welcome to him than the gayest society. Nothing was to be feared for him now. The thunderstorm had

purified the air, and another one was not to be expected soon in this dry region. He had always been well here in sunny weather. Storms, which were especially harmful to him, never came at this season of the year.

Myrtilus secretly thought that Hermon's departure would be desirable, because the slave Bias had confided to him what dangers threatened his friend from the incensed Biamite husbands.

Finally, Myrtilus turned to the others and begged them not to let Hermon leave Pelusium quickly.

When, at parting, he was alone with him, he embraced him and said more tenderly than usual: "You know how easy it will be for me to depart from life; but it would be easier still if I could leave you behind without anxiety, and that would happen if the hymeneal hymns at your marriage to Daphne preceded the dirges which will soon resound above my coffin. Yesterday I first became sure that she loves you, and, much good as you have in your nature, you owe the best to her."

Hermon clasped him in his arms with passionate affection, and after confessing that he, too, felt drawn with the utmost power toward Daphne, and urging him to anticipate complete

recovery instead of an early death, he held out his hand to his friend; but Myrtilus clasped it a long time in his own, saying earnestly: "Only this one frank warning: An Arachne like the model which Althea presented yesterday evening would deal the past of your art a blow in the face. No one at Rhodes—and this is just what I prize in you—hated imitation more, yet what would using the Arachne on the pedestal for a model be except showing the world not how Hermon, but how Althea imagines the hapless transformed mortal? Even if Ledscha withdraws from you, hold fast to her image. It will live on in your soul. Recall it there, free it from whatever is superfluous, supply whatever it lacks, animate it with the idea of the tireless artist, the mocking, defiant mortal woman who ended her life as the weaver of weavers in the insect world, as you have so often vividly described her to me. Then, my dear fellow, you will remain loyal to yourself, and therefore also to the higher truth, toward which every one of us who labours earnestly strives, and, myself included, there is no one who wields hammer and chisel in Greece who could contest the prize with you."

CHAPTER XV.

When the sun was approaching the western horizon the travellers started.

Light mists veiled the radiant right eye of the goddess of heaven. The blood of the contending spirits of light and darkness, which usually dyed the west of Egypt crimson at the departure of the great sun god, to-day vanished from sight.

The sultry air was damp and oppressive, and experienced old Philippus, who had commanded a fleet of considerable size under the first Ptolemies, agreed with the captain of the vessel, who pointed to several small dark clouds under the silvery stratus, and expressed the fear that Selene would hardly illumine the ship's course during the coming night.

But before the departure the travellers had offered sacrifices to the foam-born Cyprian Aphrodite and the Dioscuri, the protectors of mariners, and the conversation took the gayest turn.

In the harbour of the neighbouring seaport Tanis they went aboard of the commandant's state galley, one of the largest and finest in the royal fleet, where a banquet awaited them.

Cushions were arranged on the high poop, and the sea was as smooth as the silver dishes in which viands were offered to the guests.

True, not a breath stirred the still, sultry air, but the three long double ranks of rowers in the hold of the ship provided for her swift progress, and if no contrary wind sprang up she would run into the harbour of Pelusium before the last goblet was emptied.

Soon after the departure it seemed as if the captain of the little vessel had erred in his prediction, for the moon burst victoriously through the black clouds, only its shining orb was surrounded by a dull, glimmering halo.

Doubtless many a guest longed for a cool breeze, but when the mixed wine had moistened the parched tongues the talk gained fresh animation.

Every one did his or her part, for the point in question was to induce Philippus and his wife to visit Alexandria again and spend some time there as beloved guests with Daphne in her father's house or in the palace of Philotas, who

jestingly, yet with many reasons, contested the honour with the absent Archias.

The old warrior had remained away from the capital for several years; he alone knew why. Now the act which had incensed him and the offence inflicted upon him were forgotten, and, having passed seventy four years ago, he intended to ask the commander in chief once more for the retirement from the army which the monarch had several times refused, in order, as a free man, to seek again the city which in his present position he had so long avoided.

Thyone, it is true, thought that her husband's youthful vigour rendered this step premature, but the visit to Alexandria harmonized with her own wishes.

Proclus eagerly sided with her. "To him," said the man of manifold knowledge, who as high priest of Apollo was fond of speaking in an instructive tone, "experience showed that men like Philippus, who solely on account of the number of their years withdrew their services from the state, felt unhappy, and, like the unused ploughshare, became prematurely rusty. What they lacked, and what Philippus would also miss, was not merely the occupation, which might easily be supplied by another, but still more the habit of command. One who had had thousands

subject to his will was readily overcome by the feeling that he was going down hill, when only a few dozen of his own slaves and his wife obeyed him."

This word aroused the mirth of old Philippus, who praised all the good qualities of Macedonian wives except that of obedience, while Thyone protested that during her more than forty years of married life her husband had become so much accustomed to her complete submission that he no longer noticed it. If Philippus should command her to-morrow to leave their comfortable palace in Pelusium to accompany him to Alexandria, where they possessed no home of their own, he would see how willingly she obeyed him.

While speaking, her bright, clear eyes, which seemed to float in the deep hollows sunk by age, sparkled so merrily in her wrinkled face that Philippus shook his finger gaily at her and showed plainly how much pleasure the jest of the old companion of his wanderings gave him.

Yet he insisted upon his purpose of not entering Alexandria again until he had resigned his office, and to do this at present was impossible, since he was bound just now, as if with chains, to the important frontier fortress. Besides, there had probably been little change in the capital

since the death of his beloved old companion in arms and master, the late King.

This assertion evoked a storm of contradiction, and even the younger officers, who usually imposed severe restraint upon themselves in the general's presence, raised their voices to prove that they, too, had looked around the flourishing capital with open eyes.

Yet it was not six decades since Philippus, then a lad of seventeen, had been present at its foundation.

His father, who had commanded as hipparch a division of cavalry in the army of Alexander the Great, had sent for the sturdy youth just at that time to come to Egypt, that he might enter the army. The conqueror of the world had himself assigned him, as a young Macedonian of good family, to the corps of the Hetairoi; and how the vigorous old man's eyes sparkled as, with youthful enthusiasm, he spoke of the divine vanquisher of the world who had at that time condescended to address him, gazed at him keenly yet encouragingly with his all-discerning but kindly blue eyes, and extended his hand to him!

"That," he cried, "made this rough right hand precious to me. Often when, in Asia, in scorching India, and later here also, wounded

or exhausted, it was ready to refuse its service, a spirit voice within cried, 'Do not forget that he touched it'; and then, as if I had drunk the noble wine of Byblus, a fiery stream flowed from my heart into the paralyzed hand, and, as though animated with new life, I used it again and kept it worthy of his touch. To have seen a darling of the gods like him, young men, makes us greater. It teaches us how even we human beings are permitted to resemble the immortals. Now he is transported among the gods, and the Olympians received him, if any one, gladly. Whoever shared the deeds of such a hero takes a small portion of his renown with him through life and into the grave, and whom he touched, as befell me, feels himself consecrated, and whatever is petty and base flows away from him like water from the anointed body of the wrestler. Therefore I consider myself fortunate above thousands of others, and if there is anything which still tempts me to go to Alexandria, it is the desire to touch his dead body once more. To do that before I die is my most ardent desire."

"Then gratify it!" cried Thyone with urgent impatience; but Proclus turned to the matron, and, after exchanging a hasty glance with Althea, said: "You probably know, my venerable friend, that Queen Arsinoë, who most deeply

honours your illustrious husband, had already arranged to have him summoned to the capital as priest of Alexander. True, in this position he would have had the burden of disposing of all the revenues from the temples throughout Egypt; but, on the other hand, he would always have his master's mortal remains near and be permitted to be their guardian. What influences baffled the Queen's wish certainly have not remained hidden from you here."

"You are mistaken," replied Philippus gravely. "Not the least whisper of this matter reached my ears, and it is fortunate."

"Impossible!" Althea eagerly interrupted; "nothing else was talked of for weeks in the royal palace. Queen Arsinoë—you might be jealous, Lady Thyone—has been fairly in love with your hero ever since her last stay in your house on her way home from Thrace, and she has not yet given up her desire to see him in the capital as priest of Alexander. It seems to her just and fair that the old companion of the greatest of the great should have the highest place, next to her husband's, in the city whose foundation he witnessed. Arsinoë speaks of you also with all the affection natural to her feeling heart."

"This is as flattering as it is surprising,"

replied Thyone. "The attention we showed her in Pelusium was nothing more than we owed to the wife of the sovereign. But the court is not the principal attraction that draws me to the capital. It would make Philippus happy—you have just heard him say so—to remember his old master beside the tomb of Alexander."

"And," added Daphne, "how amazed you will be when you see the present form of the Soma,* in which rests the golden coffin with the body of the divine hero whom the fortunate Philippus aided to conquer the world!"

"You are jesting," interrupted the old warrior. "I aided him only as the drops in the stream help to turn the wheel of the mill. As to his body, true, I marched at the head of the procession which bore it to Memphis and thence to Alexandria. In the Soma I was permitted to think of him with devout reverence, and meantime I felt as if I had again seen him with these eyes—exactly as he looked in the Egyptian fishing village of Rhacotis, which he transformed into your magnificent Alexandria. What a youth he was! Even what would have been a defect in others became a beauty in him. The

* Soma, "the body." The tomb in which the body of the divine conqueror of the world rested in Alexandria.

powerful neck which supported his divine head was a little crooked; but what grace it lent him when he turned kindly to any one! One scarcely noticed it, and yet it was like the bend of a petitioner, and gave the wish which he expressed resistless power. When he stood erect, the sharpest eye could not detect it. Would that he could appear before me thus once more! Besides, the buildings which surrounded the golden coffin were nearly completed at the time of our departure."

"But the statues, reliefs, and mosaic work were lacking," said Hermon. "They were executed by Lysippus, Euphranor, and others of our greatest artists; the paintings by Apelles himself, Antiphilus, and Nicias. Only those who had won renown were permitted to take part in this work, and the Ares rushing to battle, created by our Myrtilus, can be seen among the others. The tomb of Alexander was not entirely completed until three years ago."

"At the same time as the Paneum," added Philotas, completing the sentence; and Althea, waving her beaker toward the old hero, remarked: "When you have your quarters in the royal palace with your crowned admirer, Arsinoë —which, I hope, will be very soon—I will be your guide."

"That office is already bestowed on me by the Lady Thyone," Daphne quietly replied.

"And you think that, in this case, obedience is the husband's duty?" cried the other, with a sneering laugh.

"It would only be the confirmation of a wise choice," replied Philippus, who disliked the Thracian's fawning manner.

Thyone, too, did not favour her, and had glanced indignantly at her when Althea made her rude remark. Now she turned to Daphne, and her plain face regained its pleasant expression as she exclaimed: "We really promised your father to let *him* show us the way, child; but, unfortunately, we are not yet in Alexandria and the Paneum."

"But you would set out to-morrow," Hermon protested, "if we could succeed in fitly describing what now awaits you there. There is only one Alexandria, and no city in the world can offer a more beautiful scene than is visible from the mountain in the Paneum gardens."

"Certainly not," protested the young hipparch, who had studied in Athens. "I stood on the Acropolis; I was permitted to visit Rhodes and Miletus——"

"And you saw nothing more beautiful there," cried Proclus. "The aristocratic Roman en-

voys, who left us a short time ago, admitted the same thing. They are just men, for the view from the Capitol of their growing city is also to be seen. When the King's command led me to the Tiber, many things surprised me; but, as a whole, how shall I compare the two cities? The older Rome, with her admirable military power: a barbarian who is just beginning to cultivate more refined manners—Alexandria: a rich, aristocratic Hellene who, like you, my young friend, completed her education in Ilissus, and unites to the elegant taste and intellect of the Athenian the mysterious thoughtfulness of the Egyptian, the tireless industry of the Jew, and the many-sided wisdom and brilliant magnificence of the other Oriental countries."

"But who disdains to dazzle the eyes with Asiatic splendour," interrupted Philotas.

"And yet what do we not hear about the unprecedented luxury in the royal palace!" growled the gray-haired warrior.

"Parsimony—the gods be praised!—no one need expect from our royal pair," Althea broke in; "but King Ptolemy uses his paternal wealth for very different purposes than glittering gems and golden chambers. If you disdain my guidance, honoured hero, at least accept that of some genuine Alexandrian. Then you will under-

stand Proclus's apt simile. You ought to begin with the royal palaces in the Brucheium."

"No, no—with the harbour of Eunostus!" interrupted the grammateus. "With the Soma!" cried the young hipparch, while Daphne wished to have the tour begin in the Paneum gardens.

"They were already laid out when we left Alexandria," said Thyone.

"And they have grown marvellously, as if creative Nature had doubled her powers in their behalf," Hermon added eagerly. "But man has also wrought amazing miracles here. Industrious hands reared an actual mountain. A winding path leads to the top, and when you stand upon the summit and look northward you at first feel like the sailor who steps on shore and hears the people speak a language which is new to him. It seems like a jumble of meaningless sounds until he learns, not only to understand the words, but also to distinguish the sentences. Temples and palaces, statues and columns appear everywhere in motley confusion. Each one, if you separate it from the whole and give it a careful examination, is worthy of inspection, nay, of admiration. Here are light, graceful creations of Hellenic, yonder heavy, sombre ones of Egyptian art, and in the background the exquisite azure of the eternal sea,

which the marvellous structure of the heptastadium unites to the land; while on the island of Pharos the lighthouse of Sostratus towers aloft almost to the sky, and with a flood of light points out the way to mariners who approach the great harbour at night. Countless vessels are also at anchor in the Eunostus. The riches of the whole earth flow into both havens. And the life and movement there and in the inland harbour on Lake Mareotis, where the Nile boats land! From early until late, what a busy throng, what an abundance of wares—and how many of the most valuable goods are made in our own city! for whatever useful, fine, and costly articles industrial art produces are manufactured here. The roof has not yet been put on many a factory in which busy workers are already making beautiful things. Here the weaver's shuttle flies, yonder gold is spun around slender threads of sheep guts, elsewhere costly materials are embroidered by women's nimble fingers with the prepared gold thread. There glass is blown, or weapons and iron utensils are forged. Finely polished knives split the pith of the papyrus, and long rows of workmen and workwomen gum the strips together. No hand, no head is permitted to rest. In the Museum the brains of the great thinkers and investigators are toiling. Here,

too, reality asserts its rights. The time for chimeras and wretched polemics is over. Now it is observing, fathoming, turning to account, nothing more!"

"Gently, my young friend," Proclus interrupted the artist. "I know that you, too, sat at the feet of some of the philosophers in the Museum, and still uphold the teachings of Straton, which your fellow-pupil, King Ptolemy, outgrew long ago. Yet he, also, recognised in philosophy, first of all, the bond which unites the widely sundered acquisitions of the intellect, the vital breath which pervades them, the touchstone which proves each true or false. If the praise of Alexandria is to be sung, we must not forget the library to which the most precious treasures of knowledge of the East and West are flowing, and which feeds those who thirst for knowledge with the intellectual gains of former ages and other nations. Honour, too, to our King, and, that I may be just, to his illustrious wife; for wherever in the Grecian world a friend of the Muses appears, whether he is investigator, poet, architect, sculptor, artist, actor, or singer, he is drawn to Alexandria, and, that he may not be idle, work is provided. Palaces spring from the earth quickly enough."

"Yet not like mushrooms," Hermon inter-

rupted, "but as the noblest, most carefully executed creations of art—sculpture and painting provide for their decoration both without and within."

"And," Proclus went on, "abodes are erected for the gods as well as for men, both Egyptian and Hellenic divinities, each in their own style, and so beautiful that it must be a pleasure for them to dwell under the new roof."

"Go to the gardens of the Paneum, friends!" cried young Philotas; and Hermon, nodding to Thyone, added gaily: "Then you must climb the mountain and keep your eyes open while you are ascending the winding path. You will find enough to do to look at all the new sights. You will stand there with dry feet, but your soul will bathe in eternal, imperishable, divine beauty."

"The foe of beauty!" exclaimed Proclus, pointing to the sculptor with a scornful glance; but Daphne, full of joyous emotion, whispered to Hermon as he approached her: "Eternal, divine beauty! To hear it thus praised by you makes me happy."

"Yes," cried the artist, "what else should I call what has so often filled me with the deepest rapture? The Greek language has no more fitting expression for the grand and lofty things

that hovered before me, and which I called by that chameleon of a word. Yet I have a different meaning from what appears before you at its sound. Were I to call it truth, you would scarcely understand me, but when I conjure before my soul the image of Alexandria, with all that springs from it, all that is moving, creating, and thriving with such marvellous freedom, naturalness, and variety within it, it is not alone the beauty that pleases the eye which delights me; I value more the sound natural growth, the genuine, abundant life. To truth, Daphne, as I mean it."

He raised his goblet as he spoke and drank to her.

She willingly pledged him, but, after removing her lips from the cup, she eagerly exclaimed: "Show it to us, with the mind which animates it, in perfect form, and I should not know wherein it was to be distinguished from the beauty which hitherto has been our highest goal."

Here the helmsman's loud shout, "The light of Pelusium!" interrupted the conversation.

The bright glare from the lighthouse of this city was really piercing the misty night air, which for some time had again concealed the moon.

There was no further connected conversa-

tion, for the sea was now rising and falling in broad, leaden, almost imperceptible waves.

The comfort of most of Philippus's guests was destroyed, and the ladies uttered a sigh of relief when they had descended from the lofty galley and the boats that conveyed them ashore, and their feet once more pressed the solid land.

The party of travellers went to the commandant's magnificent palace to rest, and Hermon also retired to his room, but sleep fled from his couch.

No one on earth was nearer to his heart and mind than Daphne, and it often seemed as if her kind, loyal, yet firm look was resting upon him; but the memory of Ledscha also constantly forced itself upon his mind and stirred his blood. When he thought of the menacing fire of her dark eyes, she seemed to him as terrible as one of the unlovely creatures born of Night, the Erinyes, Apate, and Eris.

Then he could not help recalling their meetings in the grove of Astarte, her self-forgetting, passionate tenderness, and the wonderfully delicate beauty of her foreign type. True, she had never laughed in his presence; but what a peculiar charm there was in her smile! Had he really lost her entirely and forever? Would it not yet be possible to obtain her forgiveness

and persuade her to pose as the model of his Arachne?

During the voyage to Pelusium he had caught Althea's eye again and again, and rejected as an insult her demand to give her his whole love. The success of the Arachne depended upon Ledscha, and on her alone. He had nothing good to expect from the Demeter, and during the nocturnal meditation, which shows everything in the darkest colours, his best plan seemed to be to destroy the unsuccessful statue and not exhibit it for the verdict of the judges.

But if he went to work again in Tennis to model the Arachne, did not love for Daphne forbid him to sue afresh for Ledscha's favour?

What a terrible conflict of feelings!

But perhaps all this might gain a more satisfactory aspect by daylight. Now he felt as though he had entangled himself in a snare.

Besides, other thoughts drove sleep from his couch.

The window spaces were closed by wooden shutters, and whenever they moved with a low creaking or louder banging Hermon started and forgot everything else in anxiety about his invalid friend, whose suffering every strong wind brought on again, and often seriously increased.

Three times he sprang up from the soft wool, covered with linen sheets, and looked out to convince himself that no storm had risen. But, though masses of black clouds concealed the moon and stars, and the sea beat heavily against the solid walls of the harbour, as yet only a sultry breeze of no great strength blew on his head as he thrust it into the night air.

This weather could scarcely be dangerous to Myrtilus, yet when the morning relieved him from the torturing anxiety which he had found under his host's roof instead of rest and sleep, gray and black clouds were sweeping as swiftly over the port and the ramparts beside him as if they were already driven by a tempest, and warm raindrops besprinkled his face.

He went, full of anxiety, to take his bath, and, while committing the care of the adornment of his outer man to one of the household slaves, he determined that unless—as often happened in this country—the sun gained the victory over the clouds, he would return to Tennis and join Myrtilus.

In the hall of the men he met the rest of the old hero's guests.

They received him pleasantly enough, Althea alone barely noticed his greeting; she seemed to suspect in what way he thought of her.

Thyone and Daphne extended their hands to him all the more cordially.

Philippus did not appear until after breakfast. He had been detained by important despatches from Alexandria, and by questions and communications from Proclus. The latter desired to ascertain whether the influential warrior who commanded the most important fortress in the country could be persuaded to join a conspiracy formed by Arsinoë against her royal husband, but he seemed to have left Philippus with very faint hopes.

Subordinate officers and messengers also frequently claimed the commandant's attention.

When the market place was filling, however, the sturdy old soldier kindly fulfilled his duties as host by offering to show his guests the sights of the fortified seaport.

Hermon also accompanied him at Daphne's side, but he made it easy for Philotas to engross her attention; for, though the immense thickness of the walls and the arrangement of the wooden towers which, crowned with battlements, rose at long intervals, seemed to him also well worth seeing, he gave them only partial attention.

While Philippus was showing the guests how safely the archers and slingers could be concealed

behind the walls and battlements and discharge their missiles, and explaining the purpose of the great catapults on the outermost dike washed by the sea, the artist was listening to the ever-increasing roar of the waves which poured into the harbour from the open sea, to their loud dashing against the strong mole, to the shrill scream of the sea gulls, the flapping of the sails, which were being taken in everywhere—in short, to all the sounds occasioned by the rising violence of the wind.

There were not a few war ships in the port, and among them perfect giants of amazing size and unusual construction, but Hermon had already seen many similar ones.

When, shortly after noon, the sun for a few brief moments pierced with scorching rays the dark curtain that shrouded it from sight, and then suddenly dense masses of clouds, driven from the sea by the tempest, covered the day star, his eyes and ears were engrossed entirely by the uproar of the elements.

The air darkened as if night was falling at this noontide hour, and with savage fury the foaming mountain waves rushed like mad wild beasts in fierce assault upon the mole, the walls, and the dikes of the fortified port.

"Home!" cried Thyone, and again entered

the litter which she had left to inspect the new catapults.

Althea, trembling, drew her peplos together as the storm swept her light figure before it, and, shrieking, struggled against the black slaves who tried to lift her upon the war elephant which had borne her here.

Philotas gave his arm to Daphne. Hermon had ceased to notice her; he had just gone to his gray-haired host with the entreaty that he would give him a ship for the voyage to Tennis, where Myrtilus would need his assistance.

"It is impossible in such weather," was the reply.

"Then I will ride!" cried Hermon resolutely, and Philippus scanned the son of his old friend and companion in arms with an expression of quiet satisfaction in his eyes, still sparkling brightly, and answered quickly, "You shall have two horses, my boy, and a guide who knows the road besides."

Then, turning swiftly to one of the officers who accompanied him, he ordered him to provide what was necessary.

When, soon after, in the impluvium, the tempest tore the velarium that covered the open space from its rings, and the ladies endeavoured to detain Hermon, Philippus silenced them with

the remark: "A disagreeable ride is before him, but what urges him on is pleasing to the gods. I have just ventured to send out a carrier dove," he added, turning to the artist, "to inform Myrtilus that he may expect you before sunset. The storm comes from the east, otherwise it would hardly reach the goal. But even if it should be lost, what does it matter?"

Thyone nodded to her old husband with a look of pleasure, and her eyes shone through tears at Hermon as she clasped his hand and, remembering her friend, his mother, exclaimed: "Go, then, you true son of your father, and tell your friend that we will offer sacrifices for his welfare."

"A lean chicken to Æsculapius," whispered the grammateus to Althea. "She holds on to the oboli."

"Which, at any rate, would be hard enough to dispose of in this wretched place unless one were a dealer in weapons or a thirsty sailor," sighed the Thracian. "As soon as the sky and sea are blue again, chains could not keep me here. And the cooing around this insipid rich beauty into the bargain!"

This remark referred to Philotas, who was just offering Daphne a magnificent bunch of

roses, which a mounted messenger had brought to him from Alexandria.

The girl received it with a grateful glance, but she instantly separated one of the most beautiful blossoms from its companions and handed it to Hermon, saying, "For our suffering friend, with my affectionate remembrances."

The artist pressed her dear hand with a tender look of love, intended to express how difficult it was for him to leave her, and when, just at that moment, a slave announced that the horses were waiting, Thyone whispered: "Have no anxiety, my son! Your ride away from her through the tempest will bring you a better reward than his slave's swift horse will bear the giver of the roses."

CHAPTER XVI.

HERMON, with the rose for his friend fastened in the breast folds of his chiton, mounted his horse gratefully, and his companion, a sinewy, bronzed Midianite, who was also to attend to the opening of the fortress gates, did the same.

Before reaching the open country the sculptor had to ride through the whole city, with which he was entirely unfamiliar. Fiercely as the storm was sweeping down the streets and squares, and often as the horseman was forced to hold on to his travelling hat and draw his chlamys closer around him, he felt the anxieties which had made his night sleepless and saddened his day suddenly leave him as if by a miracle. Was it the consciousness of having acted rightly? was it the friendly farewell which Daphne had given him, and the hope Thyone had aroused, or the expectation of seeing Ledscha once more, and at least regaining her good will, that had restored his lost light-heartedness? He did not know himself, nor did he desire to know.

While formerly he had merely glanced carelessly about him in Pelusium, and only half listened to the explanations given by the veteran's deep voice, now whatever he saw appeared in clear outlines and awakened his interest, in spite of the annoyances caused by the storm.

Had he not known that he was in Pelusium, it would have been difficult for him to determine whether the city he was crossing was an Egyptian, a Hellenic, or a Syrian one; for here rose an ancient temple of the time of the Pharaohs, with obelisks and colossal statues before the lofty pylons, yonder the sanctuary of Poseidon, surrounded by stately rows of Doric columns, and farther on the smaller temple dedicated to the Dioscuri, and the circular Grecian building that belonged to Aphrodite.

In another spot, still close to the harbour, he saw the large buildings consecrated to the worship of the Syrian Baal and Astarte.

Here he was obliged to wait awhile, for the tempest had excited the war elephants which were returning from their exercising ground, and their black keepers only succeeded with the utmost difficulty in restraining them. Shrieking with fear, the few persons who were in the street besides the soldiers, that were everywhere present, scattered before the huge, terrified animals.

The costume and appearance of the citizens, too, gave no clew to the country to which the place belonged; there were as many Egyptians among them as Greeks, Syrians, and negroes. Asiatics appeared in the majority only in the market place, where the dealers were just leaving their stands to secure their goods from the storm. In front of the big building where the famous Pelusinian xythus beer was brewed, the drink was being carried away in jugs and wine-skins, in ox-carts and on donkeys. Here, too, men were loading camels, which were rarely seen in Egypt, and had been introduced there only a short time before.

How forcibly all these things riveted Hermon's attention, now that no one was at hand to explain them and no delay was permitted! He scarcely had time for recollection and expectation.

Finally, the last gate was unlocked, and the ramparts and moats lay behind him.

Thus far the wind had kept back the rain, and only scattered drops lashed the riders' faces; but as soon as they entered the open country, it seemed as though the pent-up floods burst the barriers which retained them above, and a torrent of water such as only those dry regions know rushed, not in straight or slanting lines,

but in thick streams, whirled by the hurricane, upon the marshy land which stretched from Pelusium to Tennis, and on the horsemen.

The road led along a dike raised above fields which, at this season of the year, were under water, and Hermon's companion knew it well.

For a time both riders allowed themselves to be drenched in silence. The water ran down upon them from their broad-brimmed hats, and their dripping horses trotted with drooping heads and steaming flanks one behind the other until, at the very brick-kiln where Ledscha had recalled her widowed sister's unruly slaves to obedience, the guide stopped with an oath, and pointed to the water which had risen to the top of the dam, and in some places concealed the road from their eyes.

Now it was no longer possible to trot, for the guide was obliged to seek the traces of the dike with great caution. Meanwhile the force of the pouring rain by no means lessened—nay, it even seemed to increase—and the horses were already wading in water up to their fetlocks.

But if the votive stones, the little altars and statues of the gods, the bushes and single trees along the sides of the dike road were overflowed while the travellers were in the region of the marsh, they would be obliged to inter-

rupt their journey, for the danger of sinking into the morass with their horses would then threaten them.

Even at the brick-kiln travellers, soldiers, and trains of merchandise had stopped to wait for the end of the cloud-burst.

In front of the farmhouse, too, which Hermon and his companion next reached, they saw dozens of people seeking shelter, and the Midianite urged his master to join them for a short time at least. The wisest course here was probably to yield, and Hermon was already turning his horse's head toward the house when a Greek messenger dashed past the beckoning refuge and also by him.

"Do you dare to ride farther?" the artist shouted in a tone of warning inquiry to the man on the dripping bay, and the latter, without pausing, answered: "Duty! On business for the King!"

Then Hermon turned his steed back toward the road, beat the water from his soaked beard with the edge of his hand, and with a curt "Forward!" announced his decision to his companion. Duty summoned him also, and what another risked for the King he would not fail to do for his friend.

The Midianite, shaking his head, rode an-

grily after him; but, though the violence of the rain was lessening, the wind began to blow with redoubled force, beating and lashing the boundless expanse of the quickly formed lake with such savage fury that it rolled in surges like the sea, and sweeping over it dense clouds of foam like the sand waves tossed by the desert tempests.

Sometimes moaning, sometimes whistling, the gusts of the hurricane drove the water and the travellers before it, while the rain poured from the sky to the earth, and wherever it struck splashed upward, making little whirlpools and swiftly breaking bubbles.

What might not Myrtilus suffer in this storm!

This thought strengthened Hermon's courage to twice ride past other farmhouses which offered shelter. At the third the horse refused to wade farther in such a tempest, so there was nothing to be done except spring off and lead it to the higher ground which the water had not yet reached.

The interior of the peasant hut was filled with people who had sought shelter there, and the stifling atmosphere which the artist felt at the door induced him to remain outside.

He had stood there dripping barely fifteen minutes when loud shouts and yells were heard on the road from Pelusium by which he had

come, and upon the flooded dike appeared a body of men rushing forward with marvellous speed.

The nearer they came the fiercer and more bewildering sounded the loud, shrill medley of their frantic cries, mingled with hoarse laughter, and the spectacle presented to the eyes was no less rough and bold.

The majority seemed to be powerful men. Their complexions were as light as the Macedonians; their fair, red, and brown locks were thick, unkempt, and bristling. Most of the reckless, defiantly bold faces were smooth-shaven, with only a mustache on the upper lip, and sometimes a short imperial. All carried weapons, and a fleece covered the shoulders of many, while chains, ornamented with the teeth of animals, hung on their white muscular chests.

"Galatians," Hermon heard one man near him call to another. "They came to the fortress as auxiliary troops. Philippus forbade them to plunder on pain of death, and showed them—the gods be thanked!—that he was in earnest. Otherwise it would soon look here as though the plagues of locusts, flood, and fire had visited us at once. Red-haired men are not the only sons of Typhon!"

And Hermon thought that he had indeed

never seen any human beings equally fierce, bold to the verge of reckless madness, as these Gallic warriors. The tempest which swept them forward, and the water through which they waded, only seemed to increase their enjoyment, for sheer delight rang in their exulting shouts and yells.

Oh, yes! To march amid this uproar of the elements was a pleasure to the healthy men. It afforded them the rarest, most enlivening delight. For a long time nothing had so strongly reminded them of the roaring of the wind and the rushing of the rain in their northern home. It seemed a delicious relief, after the heat and dryness of the south, which they had endured with groans.

When they perceived the eyes fixed upon them they swung their weapons, arched their breasts with conscious vanity, distorted their faces into terrible threatening grimaces, or raised bugle horns to their lips, drew from them shrill, ear-piercing notes and gloated, with childish delight, in the terror of the gaping crowd, on whom the restraint of authority sternly forbade them to show their mettle.

Lust of rapine and greed for booty glittered in many a fiery, longing look, but their leaders kept them in check with the sword. So they

rushed on without stopping, like a thunderstorm pregnant with destruction which the wind drives over a terrified village.

Hermon also had to take the road they followed, and, after giving the Gauls a long start, he set out again.

But though he succeeded in passing the marshy region without injury, there had been delay after delay; here the horses had left the flooded dike road and floundered up to their knees in the morass, there trees from the roadside, uprooted by the storm, barred the way.

As night closed in the rain ceased and the wind began to subside, but dark clouds covered the sky, and the horsemen were still an hour's ride from the place where the road ended at the little harbour from which travellers entered the boat which conveyed them to Tennis.

The way no longer led through the marsh, but through tilled lands, and crossed the ditches which irrigated the fields on wooden bridges.

On their account, in the dense darkness which prevailed, caution was necessary, and this the guide certainly did not lack. He rode at a slow walk in front of the artist, and had just pointed out to him the light at the landing place of the boat which went to Tennis, when Hermon was

suddenly startled by a loud cry, followed by clattering and splashing.

With swift presence of mind he sprang from his horse and found his conjecture verified. The bridge had broken down, and horse and rider had fallen into the broad canal.

"The Galatians!" reached Hermon from the dark depths, and the exclamation relieved him concerning the fate of the Midianite.

The latter soon struggled up to the road uninjured. The bridge must have given way under the feet of the savage horde, unless the Gallic monsters, with brutal malice, had intentionally shattered it.

The first supposition, however, seemed to be the correct one, for as Hermon approached the canal he heard moans of pain. One of the Gauls had apparently met with an accident in the fall of the bridge and been deserted by his comrades. With the skill acquired in the wrestling school, Hermon descended into the canal to look for the wounded man, while his guide undertook to get the horses ashore.

The deep darkness considerably increased the difficulty of carrying out his purpose, but the young Greek went up to his neck in the water—he could not become wetter than he was already. So he remained in the ditch until he found the

injured man whose groans of suffering pierced his compassionate heart.

He was obliged to release the luckless Gaul from the broken timbers of the bridge, and, when Hermon had dragged him out on the opposite bank of the canal, he made no answer to any question. A falling beam had probably struck him senseless.

His hair, which Hermon's groping fingers informed him was thick and rough, seemed to denote a Gaul, but a full, long beard was very rarely seen in this nation, and the wounded man wore one. Nor could anything be discovered from the ornaments or weapons of this fierce barbarian.

But to whatever people he might belong, he certainly was not a Greek. The thoroughly un-Hellenic wrapping up of the legs proved that.

No matter! Hermon at any rate was dealing with some one who was severely injured, and the self-sacrificing pity with which even suffering animals inspired him, and which in his boyhood had drawn upon him the jeers of the companions of his own age, did not abandon him now.

Reluctantly obeying his command, the Midianite helped him bandage the sufferer's head, in which a wound could be felt, as well as it could

be done in the darkness, and lift him on the artist's horse. During this time fresh groans issued from the bearded lips of the injured warrior, and Hermon walked by his side, guarding the senseless man from the danger of falling from the back of the horse as it slowly followed the Midianite's.

This tiresome walk, however, did not last long; the landing place was reached sooner than Hermon expected, and the ferryboat bore the travellers and the horses to Tennis.

By the flickering light of the captain's lantern it was ascertained that the wounded man, in spite of his long dark beard, was probably a Gaul. The stupor was to be attributed to the fall of a beam on his head, and the shock, rather than to the wound. The great loss of blood sustained by the young and powerful soldier had probably caused the duration of the swoon.

During the attempts at resuscitation a sailor boy offered his assistance. He carefully held the lantern, and, as its flickering light fell for brief moments upon the artist's face, the lad of thirteen or fourteen asked if he was Hermon of Alexandria.

A curt "If you will permit," answered the question, considered by the Hellenes an unseemly one, especially from such a youth; but

the sculptor paid no further attention to him, for, while devoting himself honestly to the wounded man, his anxiety about his invalid friend increased, and Ledscha's image also rose again before him.

At last the ferryboat touched the land, and when Hermon looked around for the lad he had already leaped ashore, and was just vanishing in the darkness.

It was probably within an hour of midnight.

The gale was still blowing fiercely over the water, driving the black clouds across the dark sky, sometimes with long-drawn, wailing sounds, sometimes with sharp, whistling ones. The rain had wholly ceased, and seemed to have exhausted itself here in the afternoon.

As Archias's white house was a considerable distance from the landing place of the ferryboat, Hermon had the wounded warrior carried to it by Biamite sailors, and again mounted his horse to ride to Myrtilus at as swift a trot as the soaked, wretched, but familiar road would permit.

Considerable time had been spent in obtaining a litter for the Gaul, yet Hermon was surprised to meet the lad who had questioned him so boldly on the ferryboat coming, not from the landing place, but running toward it again from

the city, and then saw him follow the shore, carrying a blazing torch, which he waved saucily.

The wind blew aside the flame and smoke which came from the burning pitch, but it shone brightly through the gloom and permitted the boy to be distinctly seen. Whence had the nimble fellow come so quickly? How had he succeeded, in this fierce gale, in kindling the torch so soon into a powerful flame? Was it not foolish to let a child amuse itself in the middle of the night with so dangerous a toy?

Hermon hastily thought over these questions, but the supposition that the light of the torch might be intended for a signal did not occur to him.

Besides, the boy and the light in his hand occupied his mind only a short time. He had better things to think of. With what longing Myrtilus must now be expecting his arrival! But the Gaul needed his aid no less urgently than his friend. Accurately as he knew what remedies relieved Myrtilus in severe attacks of illness, he could scarcely dispense with an assistant or a leech for the other, and the idea swiftly flashed upon him that the wounded man would afford him an opportunity of seeing Ledscha again.

She had told him more than once about the healing art possessed by old Tabus on the Owl's

Nest. Suppose he should now seek the angry girl to entreat her to speak to the aged miracle-worker in behalf of the sorely wounded young foreigner?

Here he interrupted himself; something new claimed his attention.

A dim light glimmered through the intense darkness from a bit of rising ground by the wayside. It came from the Temple of Nemesis—a pretty little structure belonging to the time of Alexander the Great, which he had often examined with pleasure. Several steps led to the anteroom, supported by Ionic columns, which adjoined the naos.

Two lamps were burning at the side of the door leading into the little open cella, and at the back of the consecrated place the statue of the winged goddess was visible in the light of a small altar fire.

In her right hand she held the bridle and scourge, and at her feet stood the wheel, whose turning indicates the influence exerted by her power upon the destiny of mortals. With stern severity that boded evil, she gazed down upon her left forearm, bent at the elbow, which corresponds with the ell, the just measure.

Hermon certainly now, if ever, lacked both time and inclination to examine again this mod-

est work of an ordinary artist, yet he quickly stopped his weary horse; for in the little pronaos directly in front of the cella door stood a slender figure clad in a long floating dark robe, extending its hands through the cella door toward the statue in fervent prayer. She was pressing her brow against the left post of the door, but at her feet, on the right side, cowered another figure, which could scarcely be recognised as a human being.

This, too, was a woman.

Deeply absorbed in her own thoughts, she was also extending her arms toward the statue of Nemesis.

Hermon knew them both.

At first he fancied that his excited imagination was showing him a threatening illusion.

But no!

The erect figure was Ledscha, the crouching one Gula, the sailor's wife whose child he had rescued from the flames, and who had recently been cast off by her husband.

"Ledscha!" escaped his lips in a muttered tone, and he involuntarily extended his hands toward her as she was doing toward the goddess.

But she did not seem to hear him, and the other woman also retained the same attitude, as if hewn from stone.

Then he called the supplicant's name in a loud tone, and the next instant still more loudly; and now she turned, and, in the faint light of the little lamp, showed the marvellously noble outlines of her profile. He called again, and this time Ledscha heard anguished yearning in his deep tones; but they seemed to have lost their influence over her, for her large dark eyes gazed at him so repellently and sternly that a cold tremor ran down his spine.

Swinging himself from his horse, he ascended the steps of the temple, and in the most tender tones at his command exclaimed: "Ledscha! Severely as I have offended you, Ledscha—oh, do not say no! Will you hear me?"

"No!" she answered firmly, and, before he could speak, continued: "This place is ill chosen for another meeting! Your presence is hateful to me! Do not disturb me a moment longer!"

"As you command," he began hesitatingly; but she swiftly interrupted with the question, "Do you come from Pelusium, and are you going directly home?"

"I did not heed the storm on account of Myrtilus's illness," he answered quietly, "and if you demand it, I will return home at once; but first let me make one more entreaty, which will be pleasing also to the gods."

"Get your response from yonder deity!" she impatiently interrupted, pointing with a grand, queenly gesture, which at any other time would have delighted his artist eye, to the statue of Nemesis in the cella.

Meanwhile Gula had also turned her face toward Hermon, and he now addressed her, saying with a faint tone of reproach: "And did hatred lead you also, Gula, to this sanctuary at midnight to implore the goddess to destroy me in her wrath?"

The young mother rose and pointed to Ledscha, exclaiming, "She desires it."

"And I?" he asked gently. "Have I really done you so much evil?"

She raised her hand to her brow as if bewildered; her glance fell on the artist's troubled face, and lingered there for a short time. Then her eyes wandered to Ledscha, and from her to the goddess, and finally back again to the sculptor. Meanwhile Hermon saw how her young figure was trembling, and, before he had time to address a soothing word to her, she sobbed aloud, crying out to Ledscha: "You are not a mother! My child, he rescued it from the flames. I will not, and I can not—I will no longer pray for his misfortune!"

She drew her veil over her pretty, tear-

stained face as she spoke, and darted lightly down the temple steps close beside him to seek shelter in her parents' house, which had been unwillingly opened to the cast-off wife, but now afforded her a home rich in affection.

Immeasurably bitter scorn was depicted in Ledscha's features as she gazed after Gula. She did not appear to notice Hermon, and when at last he appealed to her and briefly urged her to ask the old enchantress on the Owl's Nest for a remedy for the wounded Gaul, she again leaned against the post of the cella door, extended both arms with passionate fervour toward the goddess, and remained standing there motionless, deaf to his petition.

His blood seethed in his veins, and he was tempted to go nearer and force her to hear him; but before he had ascended the first of the flight of steps leading to the pronaos, he heard the footsteps of the men who were bearing the wounded warrior after him.

They must not see him here with one of their countrywomen at this hour, and manly pride forbade him to address her again as a supplicant.

So he went back to the road, mounted his

horse, and rode on without vouchsafing a word of farewell to the woman who was invoking destruction upon his head. As he did so his eyes again rested on the stern face of Nemesis, and the wheel whose turning determined the destiny of men at her feet.

Assailed by horrible fears, and overpowered by presentiments of evil, he pursued his way through the darkness.

Perhaps Myrtilus had succumbed to the terrible attack which must have visited him in such a storm, and life without his friend would be bereft of half its charm. Orphaned, poor, a struggler who had gained no complete victory, it had been rich only in disappointments to him, in spite of his conviction that he was a genuine artist, and was fighting for a good cause. Now he knew that he had also lost the woman by whose assistance he was certain of a great success in his own much-disputed course, and Ledscha, if any one, was right in expecting a favourable hearing from the goddess who punished injustice.

He did not think of Daphne again until he was approaching the place where her tents had stood, and the remembrance of her fell like a ray of light into his darkened soul.

Yet on that spot had also been erected the

wooden platform from which Althea had showed him the transformation into the spider, and the recollection of the foolish error into which the Thracian had drawn him disagreeably clouded the pleasant thought of Daphne.

CHAPTER XVII.

COMPLETE darkness enfolded the white house.

Hermon saw only two windows lighted, the ones in his friend's studio, which looked out into the open square, while his own faced the water.

What did this mean?

It must be nearly midnight, and he could no longer expect Myrtilus to be still at work.

He had supposed that he should find him in his chamber, supported by his slaves, struggling for breath. What was the meaning of the light in the workrooms now?

Where was his usually efficient Bias? He never went to rest when his master was to return home, yet the carrier dove must have announced his coming!

But Hermon had also enjoined the care of Myrtilus upon the slave, and he was undoubtedly beside the sufferer's couch, supporting him in the same way that he had often seen his master.

He was now riding across the open space, and he heard the men who carried the Gaul talking close behind him.

Was the wounded barbarian the sole acquisition of this journey?

The beat of his horse's hoofs and the voices of the Biamites echoed distinctly enough amid the stillness of the night, which was interrupted only by the roaring of the wind. And this disturbance of the deep silence around had entered the lighted windows before him, for a figure appeared at one of them, and—could he believe his own eyes?—Myrtilus looked down into the square, and a joyous welcome rang from his lips as loudly as in his days of health.

The darkness of the night suddenly seemed to Hermon to be illumined. A leap to the ground, two bounds up the steps leading to the house, an eager rush through the corridor that separated him from the room in which Myrtilus was, the bursting instead of opening of the door, and, as if frantic with happy surprise, he impetuously embraced his friend, who, burin and file in hand, was just approaching the threshold, and kissed his brow and cheeks in the pure joy of his heart.

Then what questions, answers, tidings! In spite of the torrents of rain and the gale, the in-

valid's health had been excellent. The solitude had done him good. He knew nothing about the carrier dove. The hurricane had probably "blown it away," as the breeders of the swift messengers said.

Question and reply now followed one another in rapid succession, and both were soon acquainted with everything worth knowing; nay, Hermon had even delivered Daphne's rose to his friend, and informed him what had befallen the Gaul who was being brought into the house.

Bias and the other slaves had quickly appeared, and Hermon soon rendered the wounded man the help he needed in an airy chamber in the second story of the house, which, owing to the heat that prevailed in summer so close under the roof, the slaves had never occupied.

Bias assisted his master with equal readiness and skill, and at last the Gaul opened his eyes and, in the language of his country, asked a few brief questions which were incomprehensible to the others. Then, groaning, he again closed his lids.

Hitherto Hermon had not even allowed himself time to look around his friend's studio and examine what he had created during his absence. But, after perceiving that his kind act had not been in vain, and consuming with a vigorous

appetite the food and wine which Bias set before him, he obliged Myrtilus—for another day was coming—to go to rest, that the storm might not still prove hurtful to him.

Yet he held his friend's hand in a firm clasp for a long time, and, when the latter at last prepared to go, he pressed it so closely that it actually hurt Myrtilus. But he understood his meaning, and, with a loving glance that sank deep into Hermon's heart, called a last good night.

After two sleepless nights and the fatiguing ride which he had just taken, the sculptor felt weary enough; but when he laid his hand on the Gaul's brow and breast, and felt their burning heat, he refused Bias's voluntary offer to watch the sufferer in his place.

If to amuse or forget himself he had caroused far more nights in succession in Alexandria, why should he not keep awake when the object in question was to wrest a young life from the grasp of death? This man and his life were now his highest goal, and he had never yet repented his foolish eccentricity of imposing discomforts upon himself to help the suffering.

Bias, on his part, was very willing to go to rest. He had plenty of cause for weariness; Myrtilus's unscrupulous body-servant had stolen

off with the other slaves the night before, and did not return, with staggering gait, until the next morning, but, in order to keep his promise to his master, he had scarcely closed his eyes, that he might be at hand if Myrtilus should need assistance.

So Bias fell asleep quickly enough in his little room in the lower story, while his master, by the exertion of all his strength of will, watched beside the couch of the Gaul.

Yet, after the first quarter of an hour, his head, no matter how he struggled to prevent it, drooped again and again upon his breast. But just as slumber was completely overpowering him his patient made him start up, for he had left his bed, and when Hermon, fully roused, looked for him, was standing in the middle of the room, gazing about him.

The artist thought that fever had driven the wounded warrior from his couch, as it formerly did his fellow-pupil Lycon, whom, in the delirium of typhus, he could keep in bed only by force. So he led the Gaul carefully back to the couch he had deserted, and, after moistening the bandage with healing balm from Myrtilus's medicine chest, ordered him to keep quiet.

The barbarian yielded as obediently as a child, but at first remained in a sitting posture

and asked, in scarcely intelligible broken Greek, how he came to this place.

After Hermon had satisfied his curiosity, he also put a few questions, and learned that his charge not only wore a mustache, like his fellow-countrymen, but also a full beard, because the latter was the badge of the bridge builders, to which class he belonged. While examining the one crossing the canal, it had fallen in upon him.

He closed his eyes as he spoke, and Hermon wondered if it was not time for him to lie down also; but the wounded man's brow was still burning, and the Gallic words which he constantly muttered were probably about the phantoms of fever, which Hermon recognised from Lycon's illness.

So he resolved to wait and continue to devote the night, which he had already intended to give him, to the sufferer. From the chair at the foot of the bed he looked directly into his face. The soft light of the lamp, which with two others hung from a tall, heavy bronze stand in the shape of an anchor, which Bias had brought, shone brightly enough to allow him to perceive how powerful was the man whose life he had saved. His own face was scarcely lighter in hue than the barbarian's, and how sharp was the contrast

between his long, thick black beard and his white face and bare arched chest!

Hermon had noticed this same contrast in his own person. Otherwise the Gaul did not resemble him in a single feature, and he might even have refused to compare his soft, wavy beard with the harsh, almost bristly one of the barbarian. And what a defiant, almost evil expression his countenance wore when—perhaps because his wound ached—he closed his lips more firmly! The children who so willingly let him, Hermon, take them in his arms would certainly have been afraid of this savage-looking fellow.

Yet in build, and at any rate in height and breadth of shoulders, there was some resemblance between him and the Gaul.

As a bridge builder, the injured man belonged, in a certain sense, to the ranks of the artists, and this increased Hermon's interest in his patient, who was now probably out of the most serious danger.

True, the Greek still cast many a searching glance at the barbarian, but his eyes closed more and more frequently, and at last the idea took possession of him that he himself was the wounded man on the couch, and some one else, who again was himself, was caring for him.

He vainly strove to understand the impos-

sibility of this division of his own being, but the more eagerly he did so the greater became his bewilderment.

Suddenly the scene changed; Ledscha had appeared.

Bending over him, she lavished words of love; but when, in passionate excitement, he sprang from the couch to draw her toward him, she changed into the Nemesis to whose statue she had just prayed.

He stood still as if petrified, and the goddess, too, did not stir. Only the wheel which had rested at her feet began to move, and rolled, with a thundering din, sometimes around him, sometimes around the people who, as if they had sprung from the ground, formed a jeering company of spectators, and clapped their hands, laughed, and shouted whenever it rolled toward him and he sprang back in fear.

Meanwhile the wheel constantly grew larger, and seemed to become heavier, for the wooden beams over which it rolled splintered, crashing like thin laths, and the spectators' shouts of applause sounded ruder and fiercer.

Then mortal terror suddenly seized him, and while he shouted for help to Myrtilus, Daphne, and her father Archias, his slave Bias, the old comrade of Alexander, Philippus, and his wife,

he awoke, bathed in perspiration, and looked about him.

But he must still be under the spell of the horrible dream, for the rattling and clattering around him continued, and the bed where the wounded Gaul had lain was empty.

Hermon involuntarily dipped his hand into the water which stood ready to wet the bandages, and sprinkled his own face with it; but if he had ever beheld life with waking eyes, he was doing so now. Yet the barbarian had vanished, and the noise in the house still continued.

Was it possible that rats and mice——?

No! That was the shriek of a terrified human being—that a cry for help! This sound was the imperious command of a rough man's voice, that—no, he was not mistaken—that was his own name, and it came from the lips of his Myrtilus, anxiously, urgently calling for assistance.

Then he suddenly realized that the white house had been attacked, that his friend must be rescued from robbers or the fury of a mob of Biamites, and, like the bent wood of a projectile when released from the noose which holds it to the ground, the virile energy that characterized him sprang upward with mighty power.

The swift glance that swept the room was

sent to discover a weapon, and before it completed the circuit Hermon had already grasped the bronze anchor with the long rod twined with leaves and the teeth turned downward. Only one of the three little vessels filled with oil that hung from it was burning. Before swinging the heavy standard aloft, he freed it from the lamps, which struck the floor with a clanging noise.

The man to whom he dealt a blow with this ponderous implement would forget to rise.

Then, as if running for a prize in the gymnasium, he rushed through the darkness to the staircase, and with breathless haste groped his way down the narrow, ladderlike steps. He felt himself an avenging, punishing power, like the Nemesis who had pursued him in his dreams.

He must wrest the friend who was to him the most beloved of mortals from the rioters. To defeat them himself seemed a small matter.

His shout—"I am coming, Myrtilus! Snuphis, Bias, Dorcas, Syrus! here, follow me!"—was to summon the old Egyptian doorkeeper and the slaves, and inform his friend of the approach of a deliverer.

The loudest uproar echoed from his own studio. Its door stood wide open, and black smoke, mingled with the deep red and yellow

flames of burning pitch, poured from it toward him.

"Myrtilus!" he shouted at the top of his voice as he leaped across the threshold into the tumult which filled the spacious apartment, at the same time dashing the heavy iron anchor down upon the head of the broad-shouldered, half-naked fellow who was raising a clumsy lance against him.

The pirate fell as though struck by lightning, and he again shouted "Myrtilus!" into the big room, so familiar to him, where the conflict was raging chaotically amid a savage clamour, and the smoke did not allow him to distinguish a single individual.

For the second time he swung the terrible weapon, and it struck to the floor the monster with a blackened face who had rushed toward him, but at the same time the anchor broke in two.

Only a short metal rod remained in his hand, and, while he raised his arm, determined to crush the temples of the giant carrying a torch who sprang forward to meet him, it suddenly seemed as if a vulture with glowing plumage and burning beak was attacking his face, and the terrible bird of prey was striking its hard, sharp, red-hot talons more and more furiously into his lips, cheeks, and eyes.

At first a glare as bright as sunshine had flashed before his gaze; then, where he had just seen figures and things half veiled by the smoke, he beheld only a scarlet surface, which changed to a violet, and finally a black spot, followed by a violet-blue one, while the vulture continued to rend his face with beak and talons.

Then the name "Myrtilus!" once more escaped his lips; this time, however, it did not sound like the encouraging shout of an avenging hero, but the cry for aid of one succumbing to defeat, and it was soon followed by a succession of frantic outbursts of suffering, terror, and despair.

But now sharp whistles from the water shrilly pierced the air and penetrated into the darkened room, and, while the tumult around Hermon gradually died away, he strove, tortured by burning pain, to grope his way toward the door; but here his foot struck against a human body, there against something hard, whose form he could not distinguish, and finally a large object which felt cool, and could be nothing but his Demeter.

But she seemed doomed to destruction, for the smoke was increasing every moment, and constantly made his open wounds smart more fiercely.

Suddenly a cooler air fanned his burning face, and at the same time he heard hurrying steps approach and the mingled cries of human voices.

Again he began to shout the names of his friends, the slaves, and the porter; but no answer came from any of them, though hasty questions in the Greek language fell upon his ear.

The strategist, with his officers, the nomarch of the district with his subordinates, and many citizens of Tennis had arrived.

Hermon knew most of them by their voices, but their figures were not visible. The red, violet, and black cloud before him was all he could see.

Yet, although the pain continued to torture him, and a voice in his soul told him that he was blinded, he did not allow the government officials who eagerly surrounded him to speak, only pointed hastily to his eyes, and then bade them enter Myrtilus's studio. The Egyptian Chello, the Tennis goldsmith, who had assisted the artists in the preparation of the noble metal, and one of the police officers who had been summoned to rid the old house of the rats and mice which infested it, both knew the way.

They must first try to save Myrtilus's work and, when that was accomplished, preserve his also from destruction by the flames.

Leaning on the goldsmith's arm, Hermon went to his friend's studio; but before they reached it smoke and flames poured out so densely that it was impossible even to gain the door.

"Destroyed—a prey to the flames!" he groaned. "And he—he—he——"

Then like a madman he asked if no one had seen Myrtilus, and where he was; but in vain, always in vain.

At last the goldsmith who was leading him asked him to move aside, for all who had flocked to the white house when it was seized by the flames had joined in the effort to save the statue of Demeter, which they had found unharmed in his studio.

Seventeen men, by the exertion of all their strength, were dragging the heavy statue from the house, which was almost on the point of falling in, into the square. Several others were bearing corpses into the open air—the old porter Snuphis and Myrtilus's body servant. Some motionless forms they were obliged to leave behind. Both the bodies had deep wounds. There was no trace of Myrtilus and Bias.

Outside the storm had subsided, and a cool breeze blew refreshingly into Hermon's face.

As he walked arm in arm with the notary Melampus, who had invited him to his house,

and heard some one at his side exclaim, "How lavishly Eos is scattering her roses to-day!" he involuntarily lifted the cloth with which he had covered his smarting face to enjoy the beautiful flush of dawn, but again beheld nothing save a black and violet-blue surface.

Then drawing his hand from his guide's arm, he pressed it upon his poor, sightless, burning eyes, and in helpless rage, like a beast of prey which feels the teeth of the hunter's iron trap rend his flesh, groaned fiercely, "Blind! blind!" and again, and yet again, "Blind!"

While the morning star was still paling, the lad who after Hermon's landing had raced along the shore with the burning torch glided into the little pronaos of the Temple of Nemesis.

Ledscha was still standing by the doorpost of the cella with uplifted hand, so deeply absorbed in fervent prayer that she did not perceive the approach of the messenger until he called her.

"Succeeded?" she asked in a muffled tone, interrupting his hasty greeting.

"You must give the goddess what you vowed," was the reply. "Hanno sends you the message. And also, 'You must come with me in the boat quickly—at once!'"

"Where?" the girl demanded.

"Not on board the Hydra yet," replied the boy hurriedly. "First only to the old man on the Megara. The dowry is ready for your father. But there is not a moment to lose."

"Well, well!" she gasped hoarsely. "But, first, shall I find the man with the black beard on board of one of the ships?"

"Certainly!" answered the lad proudly, grasping her arm to hurry her; but she shook him off violently, turned toward the cella again, and once more lifted her hands and eyes to the statue of Nemesis.

Then she took up the bundle she had hidden behind a pillar, drew from it a handful of gold coins, which she flung into the box intended for offerings, and followed the boy.

"Alive?" she asked as she descended the steps; but the lad understood the meaning of the question, and exclaimed: "Yes, indeed! Hanno says the wounds are not at all dangerous."

"And the other?"

"Not a scratch. On the Hydra, with two severely wounded slaves. The porter and the others were killed."

"And the statues?"

"They—such things can't be accomplished without some little blunder—Labaja thinks so, too."

"Did they escape you?"

"Only one. I myself helped to smash the other, which stood in the workroom that looks out upon the water. The gold and ivory are on the ship. We had horrible work with the statue which stood in the room whose windows faced the square. They dragged the great monster carefully into the studio that fronts upon the water. But probably it is still standing there, if the thing is not already—just see how the flames are whirling upward!—if it is not already burned with the house."

"What a misfortune!" Ledscha reproachfully exclaimed.

"It could not be helped," the boy protested. "People from Tennis suddenly rushed in. The first—a big, furious fellow—killed our Loule and the fierce Judas. Now he has to pay for it. Little Chareb threw the black powder into his eyes, while Hanno himself thrust the torch in his face."

"And Bias, the blackbeard's slave?"

"I don't know. Oh, yes! Wounded, I believe, on board the ship."

Meanwhile the lad, a precocious fourteen-year-old cabin-boy from the Hydra, pointed to the boat which lay ready, and took Ledscha's bundle in his hand; but she sprang into the light

skiff before him and ordered it to be rowed to the Owl's Nest, where she must bid Mother Tabus good-bye. The cabin-boy, however, declared positively that the command could not be obeyed now, and at his signal two black sailors urged it with swift oar strokes toward the northwest, to Satabus's ship. Hanno wished to receive his bride as a wife from his father's hand.

Ledscha had not insisted upon the fulfilment of her desire, but as the boat passed the Pelican Island her gaze rested on the lustreless waning disk of the moon. She thought of the torturing night, during which she had vainly waited here for Hermon, and a triumphant smile hovered around her lips; but soon the heavy eyebrows of the girl who was thus leaving her home contracted in a frown—she again fancied she saw, where the moon was just fading, the body of a gigantic, hideous spider. She banished the illusion by speaking to the boy—spiders in the morning mean misfortune.

The early dawn, which was now crimsoning the east, reminded her of the blood which, as an avenger, she must yet shed.

END OF VOL. I.

GEORG EBERS

ARACHNE

THE HISTORICAL ROMANCES OF
GEORG EBERS

ARACHNE

VOLUME TWO

Translated from the German by
Mary J. Safford

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
New York and London

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ARACHNE.

CHAPTER I.

WHILE the market place in Tennis was filling, Archias's white house had become a heap of smouldering ruins. Hundreds of men and women were standing around the scene of the conflagration, but no one saw the statue of Demeter, which had been removed from Hermon's studio just in time. The nomarch had had it locked up in the neighbouring temple of the goddess.

It was rumoured that the divinity had saved her own statue by a miracle; Pamaut, the police officer, said that he had seen her himself as, surrounded by a brilliant light, she soared upward on the smoke that poured from the burning house. The strategist and the nomarch used every means in their power to capture the robbers, but without the least success.

As it had become known that Paseth, Gula's husband, had cast off his wife because she had

gone to Hermon's studio, the magistrates believed that the attack had been made by the Biamites; yet Paseth was absent from the city during the assault, and the innocence of the others could also be proved.

Since, for two entire years, piracy had entirely ceased in this neighbourhood, no one thought of corsairs, and the bodies of the incendiaries having been consumed by the flames with the white house, it could not be ascertained to what class the marauders belonged.

The blinded sculptor could only testify that one of the robbers was a negro, or at any rate had had his face blackened, and that the size of another had appeared to him almost superhuman. This circumstance gave rise to the fable that, during the terrible storm of the previous day, Hades had opened and spirits of darkness had rushed into the studio of the Greek betrayer.

The strategist, it is true, did not believe such tales, but the superstition of the Biamites, who, moreover, aided the Greeks reluctantly to punish a crime which threatened to involve their own countrymen, put obstacles in the way of his measures.

Not until he heard of Ledscha's disappearance, and was informed by the priest of Neme-

sis of the handsome sum which had been found in the offering box of the temple shortly after the attack, did he arrive at a conjecture not very far from the real state of affairs; only it was still incomprehensible to him what body of men could have placed themselves at the disposal of a girl's vengeful plan.

On the second day after the fire, the epistrategus of the whole Delta, who had accidentally come to the border fortress, arrived at Tennis on the galley of the commandant of Pelusium, and with him Proclus, the grammateus of the Dionysian artists, the Lady Thyone, Daphne, and her companion Chrysilla.

The old hero Philippus was detained in the fortress by the preparations for war.

Althea had returned to Alexandria, and Philotas, who disliked her, had gone there himself, as Chrysilla intimated to him that he could hope for no success in his suit to her ward so long as Daphne had to devote herself to the care of the blinded Hermon.

The epistrategus proceeded with great caution, but his efforts also remained futile. He ordered a report to be made of all the vessels which had entered the harbours and bays of the north-eastern Delta, but those commanded by Satabus and his sons gave no cause for investigation;

they had come into the Tanite arm of the Nile as lumber ships from Pontus, and had discharged beams and planks for the account of a well-known commercial house in Sinope.

Yet the official ordered the Owl's Nest to be searched. In doing this he made himself guilty of an act of violence, as the island's right of asylum still existed, and this incensed the irritable and refractory Biamites the more violently, the deeper was the reverent awe with which the nation regarded Tabus, who, according to their belief, was over a hundred years old. The Biamites honoured her not only as an enchantress and a leech, but as the ancestress of a race of mighty men. By molesting this aged woman, and interfering with an ancient privilege, the epistrategus lost the aid of the hostile fishermen, sailors, and weavers. Any information from their ranks to him was regarded as treachery; and, besides, his stay in Tennis could be but brief, as the King, on account of the impending war, had summoned him back to the capital.

On the third day after his arrival he left Tennis and sailed from Tanis for Alexandria. He had had little time to attend to Thyone and her guests.

Proclus, too, could not devote himself to them until after the departure of the epistrate-

gus, since he had gone immediately to Tanis, where, as head of the Dionysian artists of all Egypt, he had been occupied in attending to the affairs of the newly established theatre.

On his return to Tennis he had instantly requested to be conducted to the Temple of Demeter, to inspect the blinded Hermon's rescued work.

He had entered the cella of the sanctuary with the expectation of finding a peculiar, probably a powerful work, but one repugnant to his taste, and left it fairly overpowered by the beauty of this noble work of art.

What he had formerly seen of Hermon's productions had prejudiced him against the artist, whose talent was great, but who, instead of dedicating it to the service of the beautiful and the sublime, chose subjects which, to Proclus, did not seem worthy of artistic treatment, or, when they were, sedulously deprived them of that by which, in his eyes, they gained genuine value. In Hermon's Olympian Banquet he—who also held the office of a high priest of Apollo in Alexandria—had even seen an insult to the dignity of the deity. In the Street Boy Eating Figs, the connoisseur's eye had recognised a peculiar masterpiece, but he had been repelled by this also; for, instead of a handsome

boy, it represented a starving, emaciated vagabond.

True to life as this figure might be, it seemed to him reprehensible, for it had already induced others to choose similar vulgar subjects.

When recently at Althea's performance he had met Hermon and saw how quickly his beautiful travelling companion allowed herself to be induced to bestow the wreath on the handsome, black-bearded fellow, it vexed him, and he had therefore treated him with distant coldness, and allowed him to perceive the disapproval which the direction taken by his art had awakened in his mind.

In the presence of Hermon's Demeter, the opinion of the experienced man and intelligent connoisseur had suddenly changed.

The creator of this work was not only one of the foremost artists of his day, nay, he had also been permitted to fathom the nature of the deity and to bestow upon it a perfect form.

This Demeter was the most successful personification of the divine goodness which rewards the sowing of seed with the harvest. When Hermon created it, Daphne's image had hovered before his mind, even if he had not been permitted to use her as a model, and of all the maidens whom he knew there was scarcely one

better suited to serve as the type for the Demeter.

So what he had seen in Pelusium, and learned from women, was true. The heart and mind of the artist who had created this work were not filled with the image of Althea—who during the journey had bestowed many a mark of favour upon the aging man, and with whom he was obliged to work hand in hand for Queen Arsinoë's plans—but the daughter of Archias, and this circumstance also aided in producing his change of view.

Hermon's blindness, it was to be hoped, would be cured.

Duty, and perhaps also interest, commanded him to show him frankly how highly he estimated his art and his last work.

After the arrival of Thyone and Daphne, Hermon had consented to accompany them on board the Proserpina, their spacious galley. True, he had yielded reluctantly to this arrangement of his parents' old friend, and neither she nor Daphne had hitherto succeeded in soothing the fierce resentment against fate which filled his soul after the loss of his sight and his dearest friend. As yet every attempt to induce him to bear his terrible misfortune with even a certain degree of composure had failed.

The Tennis leech, trained by the Egyptian priests at Sais in the art of healing, who was attached as a pastophorus to the Temple of Isis, in the city of weavers, had covered the artist's scorched face with bandages, and earnestly adjured him never in his absence to raise them, and to keep every ray of light from his blinded eyes. But the agitation which had mastered Hermon's whole being was so great that, in spite of the woman's protestations, he lifted the covering again and again to see whether he could not perceive once more at least a glimmer of the sunlight whose warming power he felt. The thought of living in darkness until the end of his life seemed unendurable, especially as now all the horrors which, hitherto, had only visited him in times of trial during the night assailed him with never-ceasing cruelty.

The image of the spider often forced itself upon him, and he fancied that the busy insect was spreading its quickly made web over his blinded eyes, which he was not to touch, yet over which he passed his hand to free them from the repulsive veil.

The myth related that because Athene's blow had struck the ambitious weaver Arachne, she had resolved, before the goddess transformed her into a spider, to put an end to her disgrace.

How infinitely harder was the one dealt to him! How much better reason he had to use the privilege in which man possesses an advantage over the immortals, of putting himself to death with his own hand when he deems the fitting time has come! What should he, the artist, to whom his eyes brought whatever made life valuable, do longer in this hideous black night, brightened by no sunbeam?

He was often overwhelmed, too, by the remembrance of the terrible end of the friend in whom he saw the only person who might have given him consolation in this distress, and the painful thought of his poverty.

He was supported solely by what his art brought and his wealthy uncle allowed him. The Demeter which Archias had ordered had been partially paid for in advance, and he had intended to use the gold—a considerable sum—to pay debts in Alexandria. But it was consumed with the rest of his property—tools, clothing, mementoes of his dead parents, and a few books which contained his favourite poems and the writings of his master, Straton.

These precious rolls had aided him to maintain the proud conviction of owing everything which he attained or possessed solely to himself.

It had again become perfectly clear to him

that the destiny of earth-born mortals was not directed by the gods whom men had invented after their own likeness, in order to find causes for the effects which they perceived, but by deaf and blind chance. Else how could even worse misfortune, according to the opinion of most people, have befallen the pure, guiltless Myrtilus, who so deeply revered the Olympians and understood how to honour them so magnificently by his art, than himself, the despiser of the gods?

But was the death for which he longed a misfortune?

Was the Nemesis who had so swiftly and fully granted the fervent prayer of an ill-used girl also only an image conjured up by the power of human imagination?

It was scarcely possible!

Yet if there was *one* goddess, did not that admit the probability of the existence of all the others?

He shuddered at the idea; for if the immortals thought, felt, acted, how terribly his already cruel fate would still develop! He had denied and insulted almost all the Olympians, and not even stirred a finger to the praise and honour of a single one.

What marvel if they should choose him for the target of their resentment and revenge?

He had just believed that the heaviest misfortune which can befall a man and an artist had already stricken him. Now he felt that this, too, had been an error; for, like a physical pain, he realized the collapse of the proud delusion of being independent of every power except himself, freely and arbitrarily controlling his own destiny, owing no gratitude except to his own might, and being compelled to yield to nothing save the enigmatical, pitiless power of eternal laws or their co-operation, so incomprehensible to the human intellect, called "chance," which took no heed of merit or unworthiness.

Must he, who had learned to silence and to starve every covetous desire, in order to require no gifts from his own uncle and his wealthy kinsman and friend, and be able to continue to hold his head high, as the most independent of the independent, now, in addition to all his other woe, be forced to believe in powers that exercised an influence over his every act? Must he recognise praying to them and thanking them as the demand of justice, of duty, and wisdom? Was this possible either?

And, believing himself alone, since he could not see Thyone and Daphne, who were close by him, he struck his scorched brow with his clinched fist, because he felt like a free man who

suddenly realizes that a rope which he can not break is bound around his hands and feet, and a giant pulls and loosens it at his pleasure.

Yet no! Better die than become for gods and men a puppet that obeys every jerk of visible and invisible hands.

Starting up in violent excitement, he tore the bandage from his face and eyes, declaring, as Thyone seriously reprimanded him, that he would go away, no matter where, and earn his daily bread at the handmill, like the blind Ethiopian slave whom he had seen in the cabinet-maker's house at Tennis.

Then Daphne spoke to him tenderly, but her soothing voice caused him keener pain than his old friend's stern one.

To sit still longer seemed unendurable, and, with the intention of regaining his lost composure by pacing to and fro, he began to walk; but at the first free step he struck against the little table in front of Thyone's couch, and as it upset and the vessels containing water fell with it, clinking and breaking, he stopped and, as if utterly crushed, groped his way back, with both arms outstretched, to the armchair he had quitted.

If he could only have seen Daphne press her handkerchief first to her eyes, from which tears

were streaming, and then to her lips, that he might not hear her sobs, if he could have perceived how Thyone's wrinkled old face contracted as if she were swallowing a colocynth apple, while at the same time she patted his strong shoulder briskly, exclaiming with forced cheerfulness: "Go on, my boy! The steed rears when the hornet stings! Try again, if it only soothes you! We will take everything out of your way. You need not mind the water-jars. The potter will make new ones!"

Then Hermon threw back his burning head, rested it against the back of the chair, and did not stir until the bandage was renewed.

How comfortable it felt!

He knew, too, that he owed it to Daphne; the matron's fingers could not be so slender and delicate, and he would have been more than glad to raise them to his lips and thank her; but he denied himself the pleasure.

If she really did love him, the bond between them must now be severed; for, even if her goodness of heart extended far enough to induce her to unite her blooming young existence to his crippled one, how could he have accepted the sacrifice without humiliating himself? Whether such a marriage would have made her happy or miserable he did not ask, but he was

all the more keenly aware that if, in this condition, he became her husband, he would be the recipient of alms, and he would far rather, he mentally repeated, share the fate of the negro at the handmill.

The expression of his features revealed the current of his thoughts to Daphne, and, much as she wished to speak to him, she forced herself to remain silent, that the tones of her voice might not betray how deeply she was suffering with him; but he himself now longed for a kind word from her lips, and he had just asked if she was still there when Thyone announced a visit from the grammateus Proclus.

He had recently felt that this man was unfriendly to him, and again his anger burst forth. To be exposed in the midst of his misery to the scorn of a despiser of his art was too much for his exhausted patience.

But here he was interrupted by Proclus himself, who had entered the darkened cabin where the blind man remained very soon after Thyone.

Hermon's last words had betrayed to the experienced courtier how well he remembered his unkind remarks, so he deferred the expression of his approval, and began by delivering the farewell message of the epistrategus, who had been summoned away so quickly.

He stated that his investigations had discovered nothing of importance, except, perhaps, the confirmation of the sorrowful apprehension that the admirable Myrtilus had been killed by the marauders. A carved stone had been found under the ashes, and Chello, the Tennis goldsmith, said he had had in his own workshop the gem set in the hapless artist's shoulder clasp, and supplied it with a new pin.

While speaking, he took Hermon's hand and gave him the stone, but the artist instantly used his finger tips to feel it.

Perhaps it really did belong to the clasp Myrtilus wore, for, although still unpractised in groping, he recognised that a human head was carved in relief upon the stone, and Mrytilus's had been adorned with the likeness of the Epicurean.

The damaged little work of art, in the opinion of Proclus and Daphne, appeared to represent this philosopher, and at the thought that his friend had fallen a victim to the flames Hermon bowed his head and exerted all his strength of will in order not to betray by violent sobs how deeply this idea pierced his heart.

Thyone, shrugging her shoulders mournfully, pointed to the suffering artist. Proclus nodded significantly, and, moving nearer to Hermon, informed him that he had sought out his Deme-

ter and found the statue uninjured. He was well aware that it would be presumptuous to offer consolation in so heavy an affliction, and after the loss of his dearest friend, yet perhaps Hermon would be glad to hear his assurance that he, whose judgment was certainly not unpractised, numbered his work among the most perfect which the sculptor's art had created in recent years.

"I myself best know the value of this Demeter," the sculptor broke in harshly. "Your praise is the bit of honey which is put into the mouth of the hurt child."

"No, my friend," Proclus protested with grave decision. "I should express no less warmly the ardent admiration with which this noble figure of the goddess fills me if you were well and still possessed your sight. You were right just now when you alluded to my aversion, or, let us say, lack of appreciation of the individuality of your art; but this noble work changes everything, and nothing affords me more pleasure than that I am to be the first to assure you how magnificently you have succeeded in this statue."

"The first!" Hermon again interrupted harshly. "But the second and third will be lacking in Alexandria. What a pleasure it is

to pour the gifts of sympathy upon one to whom we wish ill! But, however successful my Demeter may be, you would have awarded the prize twice over to the one by Myrtilus."

"Wrong, my young friend!" the statesman protested with honest zeal. "All honour to the great dead, whose end was so lamentable; but in this contest—let me swear it by the goddess herself!—you would have remained victor; for, at the utmost, nothing can rank with the incomparable save a work of equal merit, and—I know life and art—two artists rarely or never succeed in producing anything so perfect as this masterpiece at the same time and in the same place."

"Enough!" gasped Hermon, hoarse with excitement; but Proclus, with increasing animation, continued: "Brief as is our acquaintance, you have probably perceived that I do not belong to the class of flatterers, and in Alexandria it has hardly remained unknown to you that the younger artists number me, to whom the office of judge so often falls, among the sterner critics. Only because I desire their best good do I frankly point out their errors. The multitude provides the praise. It will soon flow upon you also in torrents, I can see its approach, and as this blindness, if the august Æsculapius and healing Isis aid, will pass away like a dreary winter

night, it would seem to me criminal to deceive you about your own ability and success. I already behold you creating other works to the delight of gods and men; but this Demeter extorts boundless, enthusiastic appreciation; both as a whole, and in detail, it is faultless and worthy of the most ardent praise. Oh, how long it is, my dear, unfortunate friend, since I could congratulate any other Alexandrian with such joyful confidence upon the most magnificent success! Every word—you may believe it!—which comes to you in commendation of this last work from lips unused to eulogy is sincerely meant, and as I utter it to you I shall repeat it in the presence of the King, Archias, and the other judges.

Daphne, with hurried breath, deeply flushed cheeks, and sparkling eyes, had fairly hung upon the lips of the clever connoisseur. She knew Proclus, and his dreaded, absolutely inconsiderate acuteness, and was aware that this praise expressed his deepest conviction. Had he been dissatisfied with the statue of Demeter, or even merely superficially touched by its beauty, he might have shrunk from wounding the unfortunate artist by censure, and remained silent; but only something grand, consummate, could lead him to such warmth of recognition.

She now felt it a misfortune that she and Thyone had hitherto been prevented, by anxiety for their patient, from admiring his work. Had it still been light, she would have gone to the temple of Demeter at once; but the sun had just set, and Proclus was obliged to beg her to have patience.

As the cases were standing finished at the cabinetmaker's, the statue had been packed immediately, under his own direction, and carried on board his ship, which would convey it with him to the capital the next day.

While this arrangement called forth loud expressions of regret from Daphne and the vivacious matron, Hermon assented to it, for it would at least secure the ladies, until their arrival in Alexandria, from a painful disappointment.

"Rather," Proclus protested with firm dissent, "it will rob you for some time of a great pleasure, and you, noble daughter of Archias, probably of the deepest emotion of gratitude with which the favour of the immortals has hitherto rendered you happy; yet the master who created this genuine goddess owes the best part of it to your own face."

"He told me himself that he thought of me while at work," Daphne admitted, and a flood of the warmest love reached Hermon's ears in

her agitated tones, while, greatly perplexed, he wondered with increasing anxiety whether the stern critic Proclus had really been serious in the extravagant eulogium, so alien to his reputation in the city.

Myrtilus, too, had admired the head of his Demeter, and—this he himself might admit—he had succeeded in it, and yet ought not the figure, with its too pronounced inclination forward, which, it is true, corresponded with Daphne's usual bearing, and the somewhat angular bend of the arms, have induced this keen-sighted connoisseur to moderate the exalted strain of his praise? Or was the whole really so admirable that it would have seemed petty to find fault with the less successful details? At any rate, Proclus's eulogy ought to give him twofold pleasure, because his art had formerly repelled him, and Hermon tried to let it produce this effect upon him. But it would not do; he was continually overpowered by the feeling that under the enthusiastic homage of the intriguing Queen Arsinoë's favourite lurked a sting which he should some day feel. Or could Proclus have been persuaded by Thyone and Daphne to help them reconcile the hapless blind man to his hard fate?

Hermon's every movement betrayed the great

anxiety which filled his mind, and it by no means escaped Proclus's attention, but he attributed it to the blinded sculptor's anguish in being prevented, after so great a success, from pursuing his art further.

Sincerely touched, he laid his slender hand on the sufferer's muscular arm, saying: "A more severe trial than yours, my young friend, can scarcely be imposed upon the artist who has just attained the highest goal, but three things warrant you to hope for recovery—your vigorous youth, the skill of our Alexandrian leeches, and the favour of the immortal gods. You shrug your shoulders? Yet I insist that you have won this favour by your Demeter. True, you owe it less to yourself than to yonder maiden. What pleasure it affords one whom, like myself, taste and office bind to the arts, to perceive such a revolution in an artist's course of creation, and trace it to its source! I indulged myself in it and, if you will listen, I should like to show you the result."

"Speak," replied Hermon dully, bowing his head as if submitting to the inevitable, while Proclus began:

"Hitherto your art imitated, not without success, what your eyes showed you, and if this was filled with the warm breath of life, your work

succeeded. All respect to your Boy Eating Figs, in whose presence you would feel the pleasure he himself enjoyed while consuming the sweet fruit. Here, among the works of Egyptian antiquity, there is imminent danger of falling under the tyranny of the canon of proportions which can be expressed in figures, or merely even the demands of the style hallowed by thousands of years, but in a subject like the 'Fig-eater' such a reproach is not to be feared. He speaks his own intelligible language, and whoever reproduces it without turning to the right or left has won, for he has created a work whose value every true friend of art, no matter to what school he belongs, prizes highly.

"To me personally such works of living reality are cordially welcome. Yet art neither can nor will be satisfied with snatches of what is close at hand; but you are late-born, sons of a time when the two great tendencies of art have nearly reached the limits of what is attainable to them. You were everywhere confronted with completed work, and you are right when you refuse to sink to mere imitators of earlier works, and therefore return to Nature, with which we Hellenes, and perhaps the Egyptians also, began. The latter forgot her; the former—we Greeks—continued to cling to her closely."

"Some few," Hermon eagerly interrupted the other, "still think it worth the trouble to take from her what she alone can bestow. They save themselves the toilsome search for the model which others so successfully used before them, and bronze and marble still keep wonderfully well. Bring out the old masterpieces. Take the head from this one, the arm from that, etc. The pupil impresses the proportions on his mind. Only so far as the longing for the beautiful permits do even the better ones remain faithful to Nature, not a finger's breadth more."

"Quite right," the other went on calmly. "But your objection only brings one nearer the goal. How many who care only for applause content themselves to-day, unfortunately, with Nature at second hand! Without returning to her eternally fresh, inexhaustible spring, they draw from the conveniently accessible wells which the great ancients dug for them."

"I know these many," Hermon wrathfully exclaimed. "They are the brothers of the Homeric poets, who take verses from the Iliad and Odyssey to piece out from them their own pitiful poems."

"Excellent, my son!" exclaimed Thyone, laughing, and Daphne remarked that the poet Cleon had surprised her father with such a poem

a few weeks before. It was a marvellous bit of botchwork, and yet there was a certain meaning in the production, compiled solely from Homeric verses.

"Diomed's Hecuba," observed Proclus, "and the Aphrodite by Hippias, which were executed in marble, originated in the same way, and deserve no better fate, although they please the great multitude. But, praised be my lord, Apollo, our age can also boast of other artists. Filled with the spirit of the god, they are able to model truthfully and faithfully even the forms of the immortals invisible to the physical eye. They stand before the spectator as if borrowed from Nature, for their creators have filled them with their own healthy vigour. Our poor Myrtilus belonged to this class and, after your Demeter, the world will include you in it also."

"And yet," answered Hermon in a tone of dissent, "I remained faithful to myself, and put nothing, nothing at all of my own personality, into the forms borrowed from Nature."

"What need of that was there?" asked Proclus with a subtle smile. "Your model spared you the task. And this at last brings me to the goal I desired to reach. As the great Athenians created types for eternity, so also does Nature at times in a happy hour, for her own pleasure,

and such a model you found in our Daphne.—No contradiction, my dear young lady! The outlines of the figure— By the dog! Hermon might possibly have found forms no less beautiful in the Aphrosion, but how charming and lifelike is the somewhat unusual yet graceful pose of yours! And then the heart, the soul! In your companionship our artist had nothing to do except lovingly to share your feelings in order to have at his disposal everything which renders so dear to us all the giver of bread, the preserver of peace, the protector of marriage, the creator and supporter of the law of moderation in Nature, as well as in human existence. Where would all these traits be found more perfectly united in a single human being than in your person, Daphne, your quiet, kindly rule?"

"Oh, stop!" the girl entreated. "I am only too well aware——"

"That you also are not free from human frailties," Proclus continued, undismayed. "We will take them, great or small as they may be, into the bargain. The secret ones do not concern the sculptor, who does not or will not see them. What he perceives in you, what you enable him to recognise through every feature of your sweet, tranquillizing face, is enough for the genuine artist to imagine the goddess; for the

distinction between the mortal and the immortal is only the degree of perfection, and the human intellect and artist soul can find nothing more perfect in the whole domain of Demeter's jurisdiction than is presented to them in your nature. Our friend yonder seized it, and his magnificent work of art proves how nearly it approaches the purest and loftiest conception we form of the goddess whom he had to represent. It is not that he deified you, Daphne; he merely bestowed on the divinity forms which he recognised in you."

Just at that moment, obeying an uncontrollable impulse, Hermon pulled the bandage from his eyes to see once more the woman to whom this warm homage was paid.

Was the experienced connoisseur of art and the artist soul in the right?

He had told himself the same thing when he selected Daphne for a model, and her head reproduced what Proclus praised as the common possession of Daphne and Demeter. Truthful Myrtilus had also seen it. Perhaps his work had really been so marvellously successful because, while he was engaged upon it, his friend had constantly stood before his mind in all the charm of her inexhaustible goodness.

Animated by the ardent desire to gaze once

more at the beloved face, to which he now owed also this unexpectedly great success, he turned toward the spot whence her voice had reached him; but a wall of violet mist, dotted with black specks, was all that his blinded eyes showed him, and with a low groan he drew the linen cloth over the burns.

This time Proclus also perceived what was passing in the poor artist's mind, and when he took leave of him it was with the resolve to do his utmost to brighten with the stars of recognition and renown the dark night of suffering which enshrouded this highly gifted sculptor, whose unexpectedly great modesty had prepossessed him still more in his favour.

CHAPTER II.

After the grammateus had retired, Daphne insisted upon leaving Tennis the next day.

The desire to see Hermon's masterpiece drew her back to Alexandria even more strongly than the knowledge of being missed by her father.

Only the separation from Thyone rendered the departure difficult, for the motherless girl had found in her something for which she had long yearned, and most sorely missed in her companion Chrysilla, who from expediency approved of everything she did or said.

The matron, too, had become warmly attached to Daphne, and would gladly have done all that lay in her power to lighten Hermon's sad fate, yet she persisted in her determination to return speedily to her old husband in Pelusium.

But she did not fully realize how difficult this departure would be for her until the blind man, after a long silence, asked whether it was night,

if the stars were in the sky, and if she really intended to leave him.

Then burning sympathy filled her compassionate soul, and she could no longer restrain her tears. Daphne, too, covered her face, and imposed the strongest restraint upon herself that she might not sob aloud.

So it seemed a boon to both when Hermon expressed the desire to spend part of the night on deck.

This desire contained a summons to action, and to be able to bestir themselves in useful service appeared like a favour to Thyone and Daphne.

Without calling upon a slave, a female servant, or even Chrysilla for the smallest office, the two prepared a couch on deck for the blind man, and, leaning on the girl's stronger arm, he went up into the open air.

There he stretched both arms heavenward, inhaled deep breaths of the cool night breeze, and thirstily emptied the goblet of wine which Daphne mixed and gave him with her own hand.

Then, with a sigh of relief, he said: "Everything has not grown black yet. A delightful feeling of pleasure takes possession even of the blind man when the open air refreshes him and the

wine warms his blood in the sunshine of your kindness."

"And much better things are still in prospect," Daphne assured him. "Just think what rapture it will be when you are permitted to see the light again after so long a period of darkness!"

"When——" repeated Hermon, his head drooping as he spoke.

"It must, it must be so!" rang with confident assurance from Thyone's lips.

"And then," added Daphne, gazing sometimes upward to the firmament strewn with shining stars, sometimes across the broad, rippling expanse of the water, in which the reflection of the heavenly bodies shimmered in glittering, silvery radiance, "yes, Hermon, who would not be glad to exchange with you then? You may shake your head, but I would take your place quickly and with joyous courage. There is a proof of the existence of the gods, which so exactly suits the hour when you will again see, enjoy, admire what this dreary darkness now hides from you. It was a philosopher who used it; I no longer know which one. How often I have thought of it since this cruel misfortune befell you! And now——"

"Go on," Hermon interrupted with a smile

of superiority. "You are thinking of Aristotle's man who grew up in a dark cave. The conditions which must precede the devout astonishment of the liberated youth when he first emerged into the light and the verdant world would certainly exist in me."

"Oh, not in that way," pleaded the wounded girl; and Thyone exclaimed: "What is the story of the man you mention? We don't talk about Aristotle and such subjects in Pelusium."

"Perhaps they are only too much discussed in Alexandria," said the blind artist. "The Stagirite, as you have just heard, seeks to prove the existence of the gods by the man of whom I spoke."

"No, he *does* prove it," protested Daphne. "Just listen, Mother Thyone. A little boy grows up from earliest childhood into a youth in a dark cave. Then suddenly its doors are opened to him. For the first time he sees the sun, moon, and stars, flowers and trees, perhaps even a beautiful human face. But at the moment when all these things rush upon him like so many incomprehensible marvels, must he not ask himself who created all this magnificence? And the answer which comes to him——"

"There is only one," cried the matron; "the omnipotent gods. Do you shrug your shoul-

ders at that, son of the pious Erigone? Why, of course! The child who still feels the blows probably rebels against his earthly father. But if I see aright, the resentment will not last when you, like the man, go out of the cave and your darkness also passes away. Then the power from which you turned defiantly will force itself upon you, and you will raise your hands in grateful prayer to the rescuing divinity. As to us women, we need not be drawn out of a cave to recognise it. A mother who reared three stalwart sons—I will say nothing of the daughters—can not live without them. Why are they so necessary to her? Because we love our children twice as much as ourselves, and the danger which threatens them alarms the poor mother's heart thrice as much as her own. Then it needs the helping powers. Even though they often refuse their aid, we may still be grateful for the expectation of relief. I have poured forth many prayers for the three, I assure you, and after doing so with my whole soul, then, my son, no matter how wildly the storm had raged within my breast, calmness returned, and Hope again took her place at the helm. In the school of the denier of the gods, you forgot the immortals above and depended on yourself alone. Now you need a guide, or even two or three of them, in order

to find the way. If your mother were still alive, you would run back to her to hide your face in her lap. But she is dead, and if I were as proud as you, before clasping the sustaining hand of another mortal I would first try whether one would not be voluntarily extended from among the Olympians. If I were you, I would begin with Demeter, whom you honoured by so marvellous a work."

Hermon waved his hand as if brushing away a troublesome fly, exclaiming impatiently: "The gods, always the gods! I know by my own mother, Thyone, what you women are, though I was only seven years old when I was bereft of her by the same powers that you call good and wise, and who have also robbed me of my eyesight, my friend, and all else that was dear. I thank you for your kind intention, and you, too, Daphne, for recalling the beautiful allegory. How often we have argued over its meaning! If we continued the discussion, perhaps it might pleasantly shorten the next few hours, which I dread as I do my whole future existence, but I should be obliged in the outset to yield the victory to you. The great Herophilus is right when he transfers the seat of thought from the heart to the head. What a wild tumult is raging here behind my brow, and how one voice drowns

another! The medley baffles description. I could more easily count with my blind eyes the cells in a honeycomb than refute with my bewildered brain even one shrewd objection. It seems to me that we need our eyes to understand things. We certainly do to taste. Whatever I eat and drink—langustæ and melons, light Mareotic wine and the dark liquor of Byblus—my tongue can scarcely distinguish it. The leech assures me that this will pass away, but until the chaos within merges into endurable order there is nothing better for me than solitude and rest, rest, rest."

"We will not deny them to you," replied Thyone, glancing significantly at Daphne. "Proclus's enthusiastic judgment was sincerely meant. Begin by rejoicing over it in the inmost depths of your heart, and vividly imagining what a wealth of exquisite joys will be yours through your last masterpiece."

"Willingly, if I can," replied the blind man, gratefully extending his hand. "If I could only escape the doubt whether the most cruel tyrant could devise anything baser than to rob the artist, the very person to whom it is everything, of his sight."

"Yes, it is terrible," Daphne assented. "Yet it seems to me that a richer compensation for

the lost gift is at the disposal of you artists than of us other mortals, for you understand how to look with the eyes of the soul. With them you retain what you have seen, and illumine it with a special radiance. Homer was blind, and for that very reason, I think, the world and life became clear and transfigured for him though a veil concealed both from his physical vision."

"The poet!" Hermon exclaimed. "He draws from his own soul what sight, and sight alone, brings to us sculptors. And, besides, his spirit remained free from the horrible darkness that assailed mine. Joy itself, Daphne, has lost its illuminating power within. What, girl, what is to become of the heart in which even hope was destroyed?"

"Defend it manfully and keep up your courage," she answered softly; but he pressed her hand firmly, and, in order not to betray how self-compassion was melting his own soul, burst forth impetuously: "Say rather: Crush the wish whose fulfilment is self-humiliation! I will go back to Alexandria. Even the blind and crippled can find ways to earn their bread there. Now grant me rest, and leave me alone!"

Thyone drew the girl away with her into the ship's cabin.

A short time after, the steward Gras went to

Hermon to entreat him to yield to Thyone's entreaties and leave the deck.

The leech had directed the sufferer to protect himself from draughts and dampness, and the cool night mists were rising more and more densely from the water.

Hermon doubtless felt them, but the thought of returning to the close cabin was unendurable. He fancied that his torturing thoughts would stifle him in the gloom where even fresh air was denied him.

He allowed the careful Bithynian to throw a coverlet over him and draw the hood of his cloak over his head, but his entreaties and warnings were futile.

The steward's watchful nursing reminded Hermon of his own solicitude for his friend and of his faithful slave Bias, both of whom he had lost. Then he remembered the eulogy of the grammateus, and it brought up the question whether Myrtilus would have agreed with him. Like Proclus, his keen-sighted and honest friend had called Daphne the best model for the kindly goddess. He, too, had given to his statue the features of the daughter of Archias, and admitted that he had been less successful. But the figure! Perhaps he, Hermon, in his perpetual dissatisfaction with himself had condemned his

own work too severely, but that it lacked the proper harmony had escaped neither Myrtilus nor himself. Now he recalled the whole creation to his remembrance, and its weaknesses forced themselves upon him so strongly and objectionably that the extravagant praise of the stern critic awakened fresh doubts in his mind.

Yet a man like the grammateus, who on the morrow or the day following it would be obliged to repeat his opinion before the King and the judges, certainly would not have allowed himself to be carried away by mere compassion to so great a falsification of his judgment.

Or was he himself sharing the experience of many a fellow-artist? How often the creator deceived himself concerning the value of his own work! He had expected the greatest success from his Polyphemus hurling the rock at Odysseus escaping in the boat, and a gigantic smith had posed for a model. Yet the judges had condemned it in the severest manner as a work far exceeding the bounds of moderation, and arousing positive dislike. The clay figure had not been executed in stone or metal, and crumbled away. The opposite would probably now happen with the Demeter. Her bending attitude had seemed to him daring, nay, hazardous; but the acute critic Proclus had perceived that it

was in accord with one of Daphne's habits, and therefore numbered it among the excellences of the statue.

If the judges who awarded the prize agreed with the verdict of the grammateus, he must accustom himself to value his own work higher, perhaps even above that of Myrtilus.

But was this possible?

He saw his friend's Demeter as though it was standing before him, and again he recognised in it the noblest masterpiece its maker had ever created. What praise this marvellous work would have deserved if his own really merited such high encomiums!

Suddenly an idea came to him, which at first he rejected as inconceivable; but it would not allow itself to be thrust aside, and its consideration made his breath fail.

What if his own Demeter had been destroyed and Myrtilus's statue saved? If the latter was falsely believed to be his work, then Proclus's judgment was explained—then—then——

Seized by a torturing anguish, he groaned aloud, and the steward Gras inquired what he wanted.

Hermon hastily grasped the Bithynian's arm, and asked what he knew about the rescue of his statue.

The answer was by no means satisfying. Gras had only heard that, after being found uninjured in his studio, it had been dragged with great exertion into the open air. The goldsmith Chello had directed the work.

Hermon remembered all this himself, yet, with an imperious curtness in marked contrast to his usual pleasant manner to this worthy servant, he hoarsely commanded him to bring Chello to him early the next morning, and then again relapsed into his solitary meditations.

If the terrible conjecture which had just entered his mind should be confirmed, no course remained save to extinguish the only new light which now illumined the darkness of his night, or to become a cheat.

Yet his resolution was instantly formed. If the goldsmith corroborated his fear, he would publicly attribute the rescued work to the man who created it. And he persisted in this intention, indignantly silencing the secret voice which strove to shake it. It temptingly urged that Myrtilus, so rich in successes, needed no new garland. His lost sight would permit him, Hermon, from reaping fresh laurels, and his friend would so gladly bestow this one upon him. But he angrily closed his ears to these enticements,

and felt it a humiliation that they dared to approach him.

With proud self-reliance he threw back his head, saying to himself that, though Myrtilus should permit him ten times over to deck himself with his feathers, he would reject them. He would remain himself, and was conscious of possessing powers which perhaps surpassed his friend's. He was as well qualified to create a genuine work of art as the best sculptor, only hitherto the Muse had denied him success in awakening pleasure, and blindness would put an end to creating anything of his own.

The more vividly he recalled to memory his own work and his friend's, the more probable appeared his disquieting supposition.

He also saw Myrtilus's figure before him, and in imagination heard his friend again promise that, with the Arachne, he would wrest the prize even from him.

During the terrible events of the last hours he had thought but seldom and briefly of the weaver, whom it had seemed a rare piece of good fortune to be permitted to represent. Now the remembrance of her took possession of his soul with fresh power.

The image of Arachne illumined by the lamplight, which Althea had showed him, ap-

peared like worthless jugglery, and he soon drove it back into the darkness which surrounded him. Ledscha's figure, however, rose before him all the more radiantly. The desire to possess her had flown to the four winds; but he thought he had never before beheld anything more peculiar, more powerful, or better worth modelling than the Biamite girl as he saw her in the Temple of Nemesis, with uplifted hand, invoking the vengeance of the goddess upon him, and there—he discovered it now—Daphne was not at all mistaken. Images never presented themselves as distinctly to those who could see as to the blind man in his darkness. If he was ever permitted to receive his sight, what a statue of the avenging goddess he could create from this greatest event in the history of his vision!

After this work—of that he was sure—he would no longer need the borrowed fame which, moreover, he rejected with honest indignation.

CHAPTER III.

It must be late, for Hermon felt the cool breeze, which in this region rose between midnight and sunrise, on his burned face and, shivering, drew his mantle closer round him.

Yet it seemed impossible to return to the cabin; the memory of Ledscha imploring vengeance, and the stern image of the avenging goddess in the cella of the little Temple of Nemesis, completely mastered him. In the close cabin these terrible visions, united with the fear of having reaped undeserved praise, would have crouched upon his breast like harpies and stifled or driven him mad. After what had happened, to number the swift granting of the insulted Biamite's prayer among the freaks of chance was probably a more arbitrary and foolish proceeding than, with so many others, to recognise the incomprehensible power of Nemesis. Ledscha had loosed it against him and his health, perhaps even his life, and he imagined that she was standing before him with the bridle and wheel, threatening him afresh.

Shivering, as if chilled to the bone, overwhelmed by intense horror, he turned his blinded eyes upward to the blackness above and raised his hand, for the first time since he had joined the pupils of Straton in the Museum, to pray. He besought Nemesis to be content, and not add to blindness new tortures to augment the terrible ones which rent his soul, and he did so with all the ardour of his passionate nature.

The steward Gras had received orders to wake the Lady Thyone if anything unusual happened to the blind man, and when he heard the unfortunate artist groan so pitifully that it would have moved a stone, and saw him raise his hand despairingly to his head, he thought it was time to utter words of consolation, and a short time after the anxious matron followed him.

Her low exclamation startled Hermon. To be disturbed in the first prayer after so long a time, in the midst of the cries of distress of a despairing soul, is scarcely endurable, and the blind man imposed little restraint upon himself when his old friend asked what had occurred, and urged him not to expose himself longer to the damp night air.

At first he resolutely resisted, declaring that he should lose his senses alone in the close cabin.

Then, in her cordial, simple way, she offered to bear him company in the cabin. She could not sleep longer, at any rate; she must leave him early in the morning, and they still had many things to confide to each other.

Touched by so much kindness, he yielded and, leaning on the Bithynian's arm, followed her, not into his little cabin, but into the captain's spacious sitting room.

Only a single lamp dimly lighted the wainscoting, composed of ebony, ivory, and tortoise shell, the gay rug carpet, and the giraffe and panther skins hung on the walls and doors and flung on the couches and the floor.

Thyone needed no brilliant illumination for this conversation, and the blinded man was ordered to avoid it.

The matron was glad to be permitted to communicate to Hermon so speedily all that filled her own heart.

While he remained on deck, she had gone to Daphne's cabin.

She had already retired, and when Thyone went to the side of the couch she found the girl, with her cheeks wet with tears, still weeping, and easily succeeded in leading the motherless maiden to make a frank confession.

Both cousins had been dear to her from child-

hood; but while Myrtilus, though often impeded by his pitiable sufferings, had reached by a smooth pathway the highest recognition, Hermon's impetuous toiling and striving had constantly compelled her to watch his course with anxious solicitude and, often unobserved, extend a helping hand.

Sympathy, disapproval, and fear, which, however, was always blended with admiration of his transcendent powers, had merged into love. Though he had disdained to return it, it had nevertheless been perfectly evident that he needed her, and valued her and her opinion. Often as their views differed, the obstinate boy and youth had never allowed any one except herself a strong influence over his acts and conduct. But, far as he seemed to wander from the paths which she believed the right ones, she had always held fast to the conviction that he was a man of noble nature, and an artist who, if he only once fixed his eyes upon the true goal, would far surpass by his mighty power the other Alexandrian sculptors, whatever names they bore, and perhaps even Myrtilus.

To the great vexation of her father who, after her mother's death, in an hour when his heart was softened, had promised that he would never impose any constraint upon her in the choice of

a husband, she had hitherto rejected every suitor. She had showed even the distinguished Philotas in Pelusium, without the least reserve, that he was seeking her in vain; for just at that time she thought she had perceived that Hermon returned her love, and after his abrupt departure it had become perfectly evident that the happiness of her life depended upon him.

The terrible misfortune which had now befallen him had only bound her more firmly to the man she loved. She felt that she belonged to him indissolubly, and the leech's positive assurance that his blindness was incurable had only increased the magic of the thought of being and affording tenfold more to the man bereft of sight than when, possessing his vision, the world, life, and art belonged to him. To be able to lavish everything upon the most beloved of mortals, and do whatever her warm, ever-helpful heart prompted, seemed to her a special favour of the gods in whom she believed.

That it was Demeter, to the ranks of whose priestesses she belonged, who was so closely associated with his blinding, also seemed to her no mere work of chance. The goddess on whom Hermon had bestowed the features of her own face had deprived him of sight to confer upon

her the happiness of brightening and beautifying the darkness of his life.

If she saw aright, and it was only the fear of obtaining, with herself, her wealth, that still kept him from her, the path which would finally unite them must be found at last. She hoped to conquer also her father's reluctance to give his only child in marriage to a blind man, especially as Hermon's last work promised to give him the right to rank with the best artists of his age.

The matron had listened to this confession with an agitated heart. She had transported herself in imagination into the soul of the girl's mother, and brought before her mind what objections the dead woman would have made to her daughter's union with a man deprived of sight; but Daphne had firmly insisted upon her wish, and supported it by many a sensible and surprising answer. She was beyond childhood, and her three-and-twenty years enabled her to realize the consequences which so unusual a marriage threatened to entail.

As for Thyone herself, she was always disposed to look on the bright side, and the thought that this vigorous young man, this artist crowned with the highest success, must remain in darkness to the end of his life, was utterly incom-

patible with her belief in the goodness of the gods. But if Hermon was cured, a rare wealth of the greatest happiness awaited him in the union with Daphne.

The mood in which she found the blind man had wounded and troubled her. Now she renewed the bandage, saying: "How gladly I would continue to use my old hands for you, but this will be the last time in a long while that I am permitted to do this for the son of my Erigone; I must leave you to-morrow."

Hermon clasped her hand closely, exclaiming with affectionate warmth: "You must not go, Thyone! Stay here, even if it is only a few days longer."

What pleasure these words gave her, and how gladly she would have fulfilled his wish! But it could not be, and he did not venture to detain her by fresh entreaties after she had described how her aged husband was suffering from her absence.

"I often ask myself what he still finds in me," she said. "True, so long a period of wedded life is a firm tie. If I am gone and he does not find me when he returns home from inspections, he wanders about as if lost, and does not even relish his food, though the same cook has prepared it for years. And he, who

forgets nothing and knows by name a large number of the many thousand men he commands, would very probably, when I am away, join the troops with only sandals on his feet. To miss my ugly old face really can not be so difficult! When he wooed me, of course I looked very different. And so—he confessed it himself—so he always sees me, and most plainly when I am absent from his sight. But that, Hermon, will be your good fortune also. All you now know as young and beautiful will continue so to you as long as this sorrowful blindness lasts, and on that very account you must not remain alone, my boy—that is, if your heart has already decided in favour of any one—and that is the case, unless these old eyes deceive me."

"Daphne," he answered dejectedly, "why should I deny that she is dear to me? And yet, how dare the blind man take upon himself the sin of binding her young life——"

"Stop! stop!" Thyone interrupted with eager warmth. "She loves you, and to be everything to you is the greatest happiness she can imagine."

"Until repentance awakes, and it is too late," he answered gravely. "But even were her love strong enough to share her husband's misfor-

tune patiently—nay, perhaps with joyous courage—it would still be contemptible baseness were I to profit by that love and seek her hand."

"Hermon!" the matron now exclaimed reproachfully; but he repeated with strong emphasis: "Yes, it would be baseness so great that even her most ardent love could not save me from the reproach of having committed it. I will not speak of her father, to whom I am so greatly indebted. It may be that it might satisfy Daphne, full of kindness as she is, to devote herself, body and soul, to the service of her helpless companion. But I? Far from thinking constantly, like her, solely of others and their welfare, I should only too often, selfish as I now am, be mindful of myself. But when I realize who I am, I see before me a blind man who is poorer than a beggar, because the scorching flames melted even the gold which was to help him pay his debts."

"Folly!" cried the matron. "For what did Archias gather his boundless treasures? And when his daughter is once yours——"

"Then," Hermon went on bitterly, "the blinded artist's poverty will be over. That is your opinion, and the majority of people will share it. But I have my peculiarities, and the thought of being rescued from hunger and thirst

by the woman I love, and who ought to see in me the man from whom she receives the best gifts—to be dependent on her as the recipient of her alms—seems to me worse than if I were once more to lose my sight. I could not endure it at all! Every mouthful would choke me. Just because she is so dear to me, I can not seek her hand; for, in return for her great self-sacrificing love, I could give her nothing save the keen discontent which seizes the proud soul that is forced constantly to accept benefits, as surely as the ringing sound follows the blow upon the brass. My whole future life would become a chain of humiliations, and do you know whither this unfortunate marriage would lead? My teacher Straton once said that a man learns to hate no one more easily than the person from whom he receives benefits which it is out of his power to repay. That is wise, and before I will see my great love for Daphne transformed to hate, I will again try the starving which, while I was a sculptor at Rhodes, I learned tolerably well."

"But would not a great love," asked Thyone, "suffice to repay tenfold the perishable gifts that can be bought with gold and silver?"

"No, and again no!" Hermon answered in an agitated tone. "Something else would blend

with the love I brought to the marriage, something that must destroy all the compensation it might offer; for I see myself becoming a resentful misanthrope if I am compelled to relinquish the pleasure of creating and, condemned to dull inaction, can do nothing except allow myself to be tended, drink, eat, and sleep. The gloomy mood of her unfortunate husband would sadden Daphne's existence even more than my own; for, Thyone, though I should strive with all my strength to bear patiently, with her dear aid, the burden imposed upon me, and move on through the darkness with joyous courage, like many another blind man, I could not succeed."

"You are a man," the matron exclaimed indignantly, "and what thousands have done before you——"

"There," he loudly protested, "I should surely fail; for, you dear woman, who mean so kindly by me, my fate is worse than theirs. Do you know what just forced from my lips the exclamation of pain which alarmed you? I, the only child of the devout Erigone, for whose sake you are so well disposed toward me, am doomed to misfortune as surely as the victim dragged to the altar is certain of death. Of all the goddesses, there is only one in whose power I be-

lieve, and to whom I just raised my hands in prayer. It is the terrible one to whom I was delivered by hate and the deceived love which is now dragging me by the hair, and will rob and torture me till I despair of life. I mean the gray daughter of Night, whom no one escapes, dread Nemesis."

Thyone sank down into the chair by the blind artist's side, asking softly, "And what gave you into her avenging hands, hapless boy?"

"My own abominable folly," he answered mournfully and, with the feeling that it would relieve his heart to pour out to this true friend what he would usually have confided only to his Myrtilus, he hurriedly related how he had recognised in Ledscha the best model for his Arachne, how he had sought her love, and then, detained by Althea, left her in the lurch and most deeply offended and insulted her. Lastly, he gave a brief but vivid description of his meeting with the vengeful barbarian girl in the Temple of Nemesis, how Ledscha had invoked upon him the wrath of the terrible goddess, and how the most horrible punishment had fallen upon him directly after the harsh accusation of the Biamite.

The matron had listened to this confession in breathless suspense. Now she fixed her eyes

on the floor, shook her gray head gently, and said anxiously: "Is that it? It certainly puts things in a different light. As the son of your never-to-be-forgotten mother, you are indeed dear to my heart; but Daphne is not less dear to me, and though in your marriage I just saw happiness for you both, that is now past. What is poverty, what is blindness! Eros would reconcile far more difficult problems, but his arrows are shattered on the armour of Nemesis. Where there is a pair of lovers, and she raises her scourge against one of them, the other will also be struck. Until you feel that you are freed from this persecutor, it would be criminal to bind a loving woman to you and your destiny. It is not easy to find the right path for you both, for even Nemesis and her power do not make the slightest change in the fact that you need faithful care and watching in your blindness. Daylight brings wisdom, and we will talk further to-morrow."

She rose as she spoke; but Hermon detained her, while from his lips escaped the anxious question, "So you will take Daphne away from me, and leave me alone in my blindness?"

"You in your blindness?" cried Thyone, and the mere reproachful tone of the question banished the fear. "I would as quickly deprive

my own son of my support as I would you just at this time, my poor boy; but whether my conscience will permit me to let Daphne remain near you—— Only grant me, I repeat it, until sunrise to-morrow for reflection. My old heart will then find the right way."

"Yet whatever you may decide concerning us," pleaded the blind man, "tell Daphne that, on the eve of losing her, I first felt in its full power how warmly I love her. Even without Nemesis, the joy of making her mine would have been denied me. Fate will never permit me to possess her; yet never again to hear her gentle voice, never more to feel her dear presence, would be blinding me a second time."

"It need not be imposed upon you long," said the matron soothingly.

Then she went close to him, laid her hand on his shoulder, and said: "The power of the goddess who punishes the misdeeds of the reckless is called irresistible and uncontrollable; but one thing softens even her, and checks her usually resistless wheel: it is a mother's prayer. I heard this from my own mother, and experienced it myself, especially in my oldest son Eumedes, who from the wildest madcap became an ornament of his class, and to whom the King —you doubtless know it—intrusted the com-

mand of the fleet which is to open the Ethiopian land of elephants to the Egyptian power. You, Hermon, are an orphan, but for you, too, the souls of your parents live on. Only I do not know whether you still honour and pray to them."

"I did until a few years ago," replied Hermon.

"But later you neglected this sacred duty," added Thyone. "Yet how was that possible? In our barren Pelusium I could not help thinking hundreds of times of the grove which Archias planted in your necropolis for the dead members of his family, and how often, while we were in Alexandria, it attracted me to think in its shade of your never-to-be-forgotten mother. There I felt her soul near me; for there was her home, and in imagination I saw her walking and resting under the trees. And you—her beloved child—you remained aloof from this hallowed spot! Even at the festival of the dead you omitted prayers and sacrifices?"

The blind artist assented to this question by a silent bend of the head; but the matron indignantly exclaimed: "And did not you know, unhappy man, that you were thus casting away the shield which protects mortals from the avenging gods? And your glorious mother, who would

have given her life for you? Yet you loved her, I suppose?"

"Thyone!" Hermon cried, deeply wounded, holding out his right hand as if in defence.

"Well, well!" said the matron. "I know that you revere her memory. But that alone is not sufficient. On memorial festivals, and especially on the birthdays, a mother's soul needs a prayer and a gift from the son, a wreath, a fillet, fragrant ointment, a piece of honey, a cup of wine or milk—all these things even the poor man spares from his penury—yet a warm prayer, in pure remembrance and love, would suffice to rob the wrath of Nemesis, which the enraged barbarian girl let loose upon you, of its power. Only your mother, Hermon, the soul of the noble woman who bore you, can restore to you what you have lost. Appeal for aid to her, son of Erigone, and she will yet make everything right."

Bending quickly over the artist as she spoke, she kissed his brow and moved steadily away, though he called her name with yearning entreaty.

A short time after, the steward Gras led Hermon to his cabin, and while undressing him reported that a messenger from Pelusium had announced that the commandant Philippus was

coming to Tennis the next morning, before the market place filled, to take his wife with him to Alexandria, where he was going by the King's command.

Hermon only half listened, and then ordered the Bithynian to leave him.

After he had reclined on the couch a short time, he softly called the names of the steward, Thyone, and Daphne. As he received no answer, and thus learned that he was alone, he rose, drew himself up to his full height, gazed heavenward with his bandaged eyes, stretched both hands toward the ceiling of the low cabin, and obeyed his friend's bidding.

Thoroughly convinced that he was doing right, and ashamed of having so long neglected what the duty of a son commanded, he implored his mother's soul for forgiveness.

While doing so he again found that the figure which he recalled to his memory appeared before him with marvellous distinctness. Never had she been so near him since, when a boy of seven, she clasped him for the last time to her heart. She tenderly held out her arms to him, and he rushed into her embrace, shouting exultantly while she hugged and kissed him. Every pet name which he had once been so glad to hear, and during recent years had forgotten,

again fell from her lips. As had often happened in days long past, he again saw his mother crown him for a festival. Pleased with the little new garment which she herself had woven for him and embroidered with a tiny tree with red apples, beneath which stood a bright-plumaged duckling, she led him by the hand in the necropolis to the empty tomb dedicated to his father.

It was a building the height of a man, constructed of red Cyprian marble, on which, cast in bronze, shield, sword, and lance, as well as a beautiful helmet, lay beside a sleeping lion. It was dedicated to the memory of the brave hipparch whom he had been permitted to call his father, and who had been burned beside the battlefield on which he had found a hero's death.

Hermon now again beheld himself, with his mother, garlanding, anointing, and twining with fresh fillets the mausoleum erected by his uncle Archias to his brave brother. The species of every flower, the colour of the fillets—nay, even the designs embroidered on his little holiday robe—again returned to his mind, and, while these pleasant memories hovered around him, he appealed to his mother in prayer.

She stood before him, young and beautiful, listening without reproach or censure as he be-

sought her forgiveness and confided to her his sins, and how severely he was punished by Nemesis.

During this confession he felt as though he was kneeling before the beloved dead, hiding his face in her lap, while she bent over him and stroked his thick, black hair. True, he did not hear her speak; but when he looked up again he could see, by the expression of her faithful blue eyes, that his manly appearance surprised her, and that she rejoiced in his return to her arms.

She listened compassionately to his laments, and when he paused pressed his head to her bosom and gazed into his face with such joyous confidence that his heart swelled, and he told himself that she could not look at him thus unless she saw happiness in store for him.

Lastly, he began also to confide that he loved no woman on earth more ardently than the very Daphne whom, when only a pretty little child, she had carried in her arms, yet that he could not seek the wealthy heiress because manly pride forbade this to the blind beggar.

Here the anguish of renunciation seized him with great violence, and when he wished to appeal again to his mother his exhausted imagina-

tion refused its service, and the vision would not appear.

Then he groped his way back to the bed, and, as he let his head sink upon the pillows, he fancied that he would soon be again enwrapped in the sweet slumber of childhood, which had long shunned his couch.

It was years since he had felt so full of peace and hope, and he told himself, with grateful joy, that every childlike emotion had not yet died within him, that the stern conflicts and struggles of the last years had not yet steeled every gentle emotion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE sun of the following day had long passed its meridian when Hermon at last woke.

The steward Gras, who had grown gray in the service of Archias, was standing beside the couch.

There was nothing in the round, beardless face of this well-fed yet active man that could have attracted the artist, yet the quiet tones of his deep voice recalled to memory the clear, steadfast gaze of his gray eyes, from which so often, in former days, inviolable fidelity, sound sense, caution, and prudence had looked forth at him.

What the blind man heard from Gras surprised him—nay, at first seemed impossible.

To sleep until the afternoon was something unprecedented for his wakeful temperament; but what was he to say to the tidings that the commandant of Pelusium had arrived in his state galley early in the morning and taken his wife, Daphne, and Chrysilla away with him to Alexandria?

Yet it sounded credible enough when the Bithynian further informed him that the ladies had left messages of remembrance for him, and said that Archias's ship, upon which he was, would be at his disposal for any length of time he might desire. Gras was commissioned to attend him. The Lady Thyone especially desired him to heed her counsel.

While the steward was communicating this startling news as calmly as if everything was a matter of course, the events of the preceding night came back to Hermon's memory with perfect distinctness, and again the fear assailed him that the rescued Demeter was the work of Myrtilus, and not his own.

So the first question he addressed to Gras concerned the Tennis goldsmith, and it was a keen disappointment to Hermon when he learned that the earliest time he could expect to see him would be the following day. The skilful artisan had been engaged for weeks upon the gold ornaments on the new doors of the holy of holies in the Temple of Amon at Tanis. Urgent business had called him home from the neighbouring city just before the night of the attack; but yesterday evening he had returned to Tanis, where his wife said he would have only two days' work to do.

This answer, however, by no means appeased Hermon's impatience. He commanded that a special messenger should be sent to summon the goldsmith, and the Bithynian received the order with a slight shake of his round head.

What new trouble had befallen the usually alert young artist that he received this unexpected change in his situation as apathetically as a horse which is led from one stall to another, and, instead of questioning him, thought only of hastening his interview with the goldsmith? If his mistress, who had left him full of anxiety from the fear that her departure would deeply agitate the blind man, should learn how indifferently he had received it! He, Gras, certainly would not betray it. Eternal gods—these artists! He knew them. Their work was dearer to their hearts than their own lives, love, or friendship.

During breakfast, of which the steward was obliged to remind him, Hermon pondered over his fate; but how could he attain any degree of clearness of vision until he secured accurate information concerning the statue of Demeter? Like a dark cloud, which sweeps over the starry sky and prevents the astronomer from seeing the planets which he desires to observe, the fear that Proclus's praise had been bestowed upon

the work of Myrtilus stood between him and every goal of his thought.

Only the fact that he still remained blind, and not even the faintest glimmer of light pierced the surrounding darkness, while the sun continued its course with glowing radiance, and that, blinded and beggared, he must despise himself if he sought to win Daphne, was certain. No reflection could alter it.

Again the peace of mind which he thought he had regained during slumber was destroyed. Fear of the artisan's statement even rendered it impossible to pray to his mother with the affectionate devotion he had felt the day before.

The goldsmith had directed the rescue of the Demeter, yet he would scarcely have been able to distinguish it from the statue by Myrtilus; for though, like his friend, he had often employed his skilful hands in the arrangement of the gold plates at the commencement of the work, the Egyptian had been summoned to Tennis before the statues had attained recognisable form. He had not entered the studios for several months, unless Bias had granted him admittance without informing his master. This was quite possible, for the slave's keen eyes certainly had not failed to notice how little he and Myrtilus valued the opinion of the honest, skil-

ful, but extremely practical and unimaginative man, who could not create independently even the smallest detail.

So it was impossible to determine at present whether Chello had seen the finished statues or not, yet Hermon desired the former with actual fervour, that he might have positive certainty.

While reflecting over these matters, the image of the lean Egyptian goldsmith, with his narrow, brown, smooth-shaven face and skull, prominent cheek bones, receding brow, projecting ears and, with all its keenness, lustreless glance, rose before him as if he could see his bodily presence. Not a single word unconnected with his trade, the weather, or an accident, had ever reached the friends' ears from Chello's thick lips, and this circumstance seemed to warrant Hermon in the expectation of learning from him the pure, unadulterated truth.

Rarely had a messenger of love been awaited with such feverish suspense as the slave whom Gras had despatched to Tanis to induce the goldsmith to return home. He might come soon after nightfall, and Hermon used the interval to ask the Bithynian the questions which he had long expected.

The replies afforded little additional information. He learned only that Philippus had been

summoned to Alexandria by the King, and that the Lady Thyone and her husband had talked with the leech and assented to his opinion that it would be better for Hermon to wait here until the burns on his face were healed before returning to Alexandria.

For Daphne's sake this decision had undoubtedly been welcome to the matron, and it pleased him also; for he still felt so ill physically, and so agitated mentally, that he shrank from meeting his numerous acquaintances in the capital.

The goldsmith! the goldsmith! It depended upon his decision whether he would return to Alexandria at all.

Soon after Hermon had learned from Gras that the stars had risen, he was informed that he must wait patiently for his interview with the Egyptian, as he had been summoned to the capital that very day by a messenger from Proclus.

Then the steward had fresh cause to marvel at his charge, for this news aroused the most vehement excitement.

In fact, it afforded the prospect of a series—perhaps a long one—of the most torturing days and nights. And the dreaded hours actually came—nay, the anguish of uncertainty had be-

come almost unendurable, when, on the seventh day, the Egyptian at last returned from Alexandria. They had seemed like weeks to Hermon, had made his face thinner, and mingled the first silver hairs in his black beard.

The calls of the cheerful notary and the daily visits of the leech, an elderly man, who had depressed rather than cheered him by informing him of many cases like his own which all proved incurable, had been his sole diversion. True, the heads of the Greek residents of Tennis had also sometimes sought him: the higher government officials, the lessees of the oil monopoly and the royal bank, as well as Gorgias, who, next to Archias the Alexandrian, owned the largest weaving establishments, but the tales of daily incidents with which they entertained Hermon wearied him. He listened with interest only to the story of Ledscha's disappearance, yet he perceived, from the very slight impression it made upon him, how little he had really cared for the Bianite girl.

His inquiries about Gula called down upon him many well-meant jests. She was with her parents; while Taus, Ledscha's young sister, was staying at the brick-kiln, where the former had reduced the unruly slaves to submission.

Care had been taken to provide for his per-

sonal safety, for the attack might perhaps yet prove to have been connected with the jealousy of the Biamite husbands.

The commandant of Pelusium had therefore placed a small garrison of heavily armed soldiers and archers in Tennis, for whom tents had been pitched on the site of the burned white house.

Words of command and signals for changing the guards often reached Hermon when he was on the deck of his ship, and visitors praised the wise caution and prompt action of Alexander the Great's old comrade.

The notary, a vivacious man of fifty, who had lived a long time in Alexandria and, asserting that he grew dull and withered in little Tennis, went to the capital as frequently as possible, had often called upon the sculptor at first, and been disposed to discuss art and the other subjects dear to Hermon's heart, but on the third day he again set off for his beloved Alexandria. When saying farewell, he had been unusually merry, and asked Hermon to send him away with good wishes and offer sacrifices for the success of his business, since he hoped to bring a valuable gift on his return from the journey.

The blind artist was glad to have other visits for a short time, but he preferred to be alone and devote his thoughts to his own affairs.

He now knew that his love was genuine. Daphne seemed the very incarnation of desirable, artless, heart-refreshing womanliness, but his memory could not dwell with her long; anxiety concerning Chello's report only too quickly interrupted it, as soon as he yielded to its charm.

He did not think at all of the future. What was he to appoint for a time which the words of a third person might render unendurable?

When Gras at last ushered in the goldsmith, his heart throbbed so violently that it was difficult for him to find the words needed for the questions he desired to ask.

The Egyptian had really been summoned to Alexandria by Proclus, not on account of the Demeter, but the clasp said to belong to Myrtilus, found amid the ruins of the fallen house, and he had been able to identify it with absolute positiveness as the sculptor's property.

He had been referred from one office to another, until finally the Tennis notary and Proclus opened the right doors to him.

Now the importance of his testimony appeared, since the will of the wealthy young sculptor could not be opened until his death was proved, and the clasp which had been found aided in doing so.

Hermon's question whether he had heard

any particulars about this will was answered by the cold-hearted, dull-brained man in the negative.

He had done enough, he said, by expressing his opinion. He had gone to Alexandria unwillingly, and would certainly have stayed in Tennis if he could have foreseen what a number of tiresome examinations he would be obliged to undergo. He had been burning with impatience to quit the place, on account of the important work left behind in Tanis, and he did not even know whether he would be reimbursed for his travelling expenses.

During this preliminary conversation Hermon gained the composure he needed.

He began by ascertaining whether Chello remembered the interior arrangement of the burned white house, and it soon appeared that he recollected it accurately.

Then the blind man requested him to tell how the rescue of the statue had been managed, and the account of the extremely prosaic artisan described so clearly and practically how, on entering the burning building, he found Myrtilus's studio already inaccessible, but the statue of Demeter in Hermon's still uninjured, that the trustworthiness of his story could not be doubted.

One circumstance only appeared strange, yet it was easily explained. Instead of standing on the pedestal, the Demeter was beside it, and even the slow-witted goldsmith inferred from this fact that the robbers had intended to steal it and placed it on the floor for that purpose, but were prevented from accomplishing their design by the interference of Hermon and the people from Tennis.

After the Egyptian, in reply to the artist's inquiry concerning what other works of art and implements he had seen in the studio, had answered that nothing else could be distinguished on account of the smoke, he congratulated the sculptor on his last work. People were already making a great stir about the new Demeter. It had been discussed not only in the workshop of his brother, who, like himself, followed their father's calling, but also in the offices, at the harbour, in the barbers' rooms and the cookshops, and he, too, must admit that, for a Greek goddess, that always lacked genuine, earnest dignity, it really was a pretty bit of work.

Lastly, the Egyptian asked to whom he should apply for payment for the remainder of his labour.

The strip of gold, from which Hermon had ordered the diadem to be made, had attracted

his attention on the head of his Demeter, and compensation for the work upon this ornament was still due.

Hermon, deeply agitated, asked, with glowing cheeks, whether Chello really positively remembered having prepared for him the gold diadem which he had seen in Alexandria, and the Egyptian eagerly assured him that he had done so. Hitherto he had found the sculptors honest men, and Hermon would not withhold the payment for his well-earned toil.

The artist strenuously denied such an intention; but when, in his desire to have the most absolute assurance, he again asked questions about the diadem, the Egyptian thought that the blind sculptor doubted the justice of his demand, and wrathfully insisted upon his claim, until Gras managed to whisper, undetected by Hermon, that he would have the money ready for him.

This satisfied the angry man. He honestly believed that he had prepared the gold for the ornament on the head of the Demeter in Alexandria; yet the statue chiselled by Myrtilus had also been adorned with a diadem, and Chello had wrought the strip of gold it required. Only it had escaped his memory, because he had been paid for the work immediately after its delivery.

Glad to obey his mistress's orders to settle at once any debts which the artist might have in Tennis, the steward followed the goldsmith, while Hermon, seizing the huge goblet which had just been filled with wine and water for him, drained it at one long draught. Then, with a sigh of relief, he restored it to its place, raised his hand and his blinded eyes heavenward, and offered a brief, fervent thanksgiving to his mother's soul and the great Demeter, whom, he might now believe it himself, he had honoured with a masterpiece which had extorted warm admiration even from a connoisseur unfriendly to his art.

When Gras returned, he said, with a grin of satisfaction, that the goldsmith was like all the rest of his countrymen. The artists did not owe him another drachm; the never-to-be-forgotten Myrtilus had paid for the work ordered by Hermon also.

Then, for the first time since he had been led on board the ship, a gay laugh rang from the blind man's lips, rising in deep, pure, joyous tones from his relieved breast.

The faithful gray eyes of honest Gras glittered with tears at the musical tones, and how ardently he wished for his beloved mistress when the sculptor, not content with this, exclaimed

as gleefully as in happier days: " Hitherto I have had no real pleasure from my successful work, old Gras, but it is awaking now! If my Myrtilus were still alive, and these miserable eyes yet possessed the power of rejoicing in the light and in beautiful human forms, by the dog! I would have the mixing vessels filled, wreath after wreath brought, boon companions summoned, and with flute-playing, songs, and fiery words, offer the Muses, Demeter, and Dionysus their due meed of homage! "

Gras declared that this wish might easily be fulfilled. There was no lack of wine or drinking cups on the vessel, the flute-players whom he had heard in the Odeum at Tanis did not understand their business amiss, flowers and wreaths could be obtained, and all who spoke Greek in Tennis would accept his invitation.

But the Bithynian soon regretted this proposal, for it fell like a hoar-frost upon the blind man's happy mood. He curtly declined. He would not play host where he was himself a guest, and pride forbade him to use the property of others as though it were his own.

He could not regain his suddenly awakened pleasure in existence before Gras warned him it was time to go to rest. Not until he was alone

in the quiet cabin did the sense of joy in his first great success overpower him afresh.

He might well feel proud delight in the work which he had created, for he had accomplished it without being unfaithful to the aims he had set before him.

It had been taken from his own studio, and the skilful old artisan had recognised his preliminary work upon the diadem which he, Hermon, had afterward adorned with ornaments himself. But, alas! this first must at the same time be his last great success, and he was condemned to live on in darkness.

Although abundant recognition awaited him in Alexandria, his quickly gained renown would soon be forgotten, and he would remain a beggared blind man. But it was now allowable for him to think secretly of possessing Daphne; perhaps she would wait for him and reject other suitors until he learned in the capital whether he might not hope to recover his lost sight. He was at least secure against external want; the generous Archias would hardly withhold from him the prize he had intended for the successful statue, although the second had been destroyed. The great merchant would do everything for his fame-crowned nephew, and he, Hermon, was conscious that had his uncle been

in his situation he would have divided his last obol with him. Refusal of his assistance would have been an insult to his paternal friend and guardian.

Lastly, he might hope that Archias would take him to the most skilful leeches in Alexandria and, if they succeeded in restoring his lost power of vision, then—then—— Yet it seemed so presumptuous to lull himself in this hope that he forbade himself the pleasure of indulging it.

Amid these consoling reflections, Hermon fell asleep, and awoke fresher and more cheerful than he had been for some time.

He had to spend two whole weeks more in Tennis, for the burns healed slowly, and an anxious fear kept him away from Alexandria.

There the woman he loved would again meet him and, though he could assure Thyone that Nemesis had turned her wheel away from him, he would have been permitted to treat Daphne only with cool reserve, while every fibre of his being urged him to confess his love and clasp her in his arms.

Gras had already written twice to his master, telling him with what gratifying patience Hermon was beginning to submit to his great misfortune, when the notary Melampus returned from Alexandria with news which produced the

most delightful transformation in the blind artist's outer life.

More swiftly than his great corpulence usually permitted the jovial man to move, he ascended to the deck, calling: "Great, greater, the greatest of news I bring, as the heaviest but by no means the most dilatory of messengers of good fortune from the city of cities. Prick up your ears, my friend, and summon all your strength, for there are instances of the fatal effect of especially lavish gifts from the blind and yet often sure aim of the goddess of Fortune. The Demeter, in whom you proved so marvellously that the art of a mortal is sufficient to create immortals, is beginning to show her gratitude. She is helping to twine wreaths for you in Alexandria."

Here the vivacious man suddenly hesitated and, while wiping his plump cheeks, perspiring brow, and smooth, fat double chin with his kerchief, added in a tone of sincere regret: "That's the way with me! In one thing which really moves me, I always forget the other. The fault sticks to me like my ears and nose. When my mother gave me two errands, I attended to the first in the best possible way, but overlooked the second entirely, and was paid for it with my father's staff, yet even the blue wales made

no change in the fault. But for that I should still be in the city of cities; but it robbed me of my best clients, and so I was transferred to this dullest of holes. Even here it clings to me. My detestable exultation just now proves it. Yet I know how dear to you was the dead man who manifests his love even from the grave. But you will forgive me the false note into which my weakness led me; it sprang from regard for you, my young friend. To serve your cause, I forgot everything else. Like my mother's first errand, it was performed in the best possible way. You will learn directly. By the lightnings of Father Zeus and the owl of Athene, the news I bring is certainly great and beautiful; but he who yearned to make you happy was snatched from you and, though his noble legacy must inspire pleasure and gratitude, it will nevertheless fill your poor eyes with sorrowful tears."

Melampus turned, as he spoke, to the misshapen Egyptian slave who performed the duties of a clerk, and took several rolls from the drum-shaped case that hung around his neck; but his prediction concerning Hermon was speedily fulfilled, for the notary handed him the will of his friend Myrtilus.

It made him the heir of his entire fortune and, however happy the unexpected royal gift

rendered the blind man, however cheering might be the prospects it opened to him for the future and the desire of his heart, sobs nevertheless interrupted the affectionate words which commenced the document Melampus read aloud to him.

Doubtless the tears which Hermon dedicated to the most beloved of human beings made his blinded eyes smart, but he could not restrain them, and even long after the notary had left him, and the steward had congratulated him on his good fortune, the deep emotion of his tender heart again and again called forth a fresh flood of tears consecrated to the memory of his friend.

The notary had already informed the grammateus of the disposition which Myrtilus had made of his property in Hermon's favour a few days before, but, by the advice of the experienced Proclus, the contents of the will had been withheld from the sculptor; the unfortunate man ought to be spared any disappointment, and proof that Myrtilus was really among the victims of the accident must first be obtained.

The clasp found in the ruins of the white house appeared to furnish this, and the notary had put all other business aside and gone to Alexandria to settle the matter.

The goldsmith Chello, who had fastened a

new pin to the clasp, and could swear that it had belonged to Myrtilus, had been summoned to the capital as a witness, and, with the aid of the influential grammateus of the Dionysian games and priest of Apollo, the zeal of Melampus had accomplished in a short time the settlement of this difficult affair, which otherwise might perhaps have consumed several months.

The violent death of Myrtilus had been admitted as proved by the magistrate, who had been prepossessed in Hermon's favour by his masterpiece. Besides, no doubts could be raised concerning the validity of a will attested by sixteen witnesses. The execution of this last testament had been intrusted to Archias, as Myrtilus's nearest relative, and several other distinguished Alexandrians.

The amount of the fortune bequeathed had surprised even these wealthy men, for under the prudent management of Archias the property inherited by the modest young sculptor had trebled in value.

The poor blind artist had suddenly become a man who might be termed "rich," even in the great capital.

Again the steward shook his head; this vast, unexpected inheritance did not seem to make half so deep an impression upon the eccentric

blind man as the news received a short time ago that his trivial debt to the goldsmith Chello was already settled. But Hermon must have dearly loved the friend to whom he owed this great change of fortune, and grief for him had cast joy in his immense new wealth completely into the shade.

This conjecture was confirmed on the following morning, for the blind man had himself led to the Greek necropolis to offer sacrifices to the gods of the nether world and to think of his friend.

When, soon after noon, the lessee of the royal bank appeared on the ship to offer him as many drachmæ or talents as he might need for present use, he asked for a considerable sum to purchase a larger death-offering for his murdered friend. The next morning he went with the architect of the province to the scene of the conflagration, and had him mark the spot of ground on which he desired to erect to his Myrtilus a monument to be made in Alexandria.

At sunset, leaning on the steward's arm, he went to the Temple of Nemesis, where he prayed and commissioned the priest to offer a costly sacrifice to the goddess in his name.

On the return home, Hermon suddenly stood still and mentioned to Gras the sum which he

intended to bestow upon the blind in Tennis. He knew now what it means to live bereft of light, and, he added in a low tone, to be also poor and unable to earn his daily bread.

On the ship he asked the Bithynian whether his burned face had become presentable again, and no longer made a repulsive impression.

This Gras could truthfully assure him.

Then the artist's features brightened, and the Bithynian heard genuine cheerfulness ring in the tones of his voice as he exclaimed: "Then, old Gras, we will set out for Alexandria as soon as the ship is ready to sail. Back to life, to the society of men of my own stamp, to reap the praise earned by my own creations, and to the only divine maiden among mortals—to Daphne!"

"The day after to-morrow!" exclaimed the steward in joyous excitement; and soon after the carrier dove was flying toward the house of Archias, bearing the letter which stated the hour when his fame-crowned blind nephew would enter the great harbour of Alexandria.

The evening of the next day but one the Proserpina was bearing Hermon away from the city of weavers toward home.

As the evening breeze fanned his brow, his thoughts dwelt sadly on his Myrtilus. Hitherto

it had always seemed as if he was bound, and must commit some atrocious deed to use the seething power condemned to inaction. But as the galley left the Tanitic branch of the Nile behind, and the blind man inhaled the cool air upon the calm sea, his heart swelled, and for the first time he became fully aware that, though the light of the sun would probably never shine for him again, and therefore the joy of creating, the rapture of once more testing his fettered strength, would probably be forever denied him, other stars might perhaps illumine his path, and he was going, in a position of brilliant independence, toward his native city, fame, and—eternal gods!—love.

Daphne had conquered, and he gave only a passing thought to Ledscha and the hapless weaver Arachne.

CHAPTER V.

At the third hour after sunrise a distinguished assemblage of people gathered at the landing place east of the Temple of Poseidon in the great harbour of Alexandria.

Its members belonged to the upper classes, for many had come in carriages and litters, and numerous pedestrians were accompanied by slaves bearing in delicately woven baskets and cornucopias a laurel wreath, a papyrus crown, or bright-hued flowers.

The most aristocratic among the gentlemen had gathered on the western side of the great sanctuary, between the cella and the long row of Doric columns which supported the roof of the marble temple.

The Macedonian Council of the city was already represented by several of its members. Among their number was Archias, Daphne's father, a man of middle height and comfortable portliness, from whose well-formed, beardless face looked forth a pair of shrewd eyes, and

whose quick movements revealed the slight irritability of his temperament.

Several members of the Council and wealthy merchants surrounded him, while the grammateus Proclus first talked animatedly with other government officials and representatives of the priesthood, and then with Archias. The head of the Museum, who bore the title of "high priest," had also appeared there with several members of this famous centre of the intellectual life of the capital. They shared the shade of this part of the temple with distinguished masters of sculpture and painting, architecture and poetry, and conversed together with the graceful animation of Greeks endowed with great intellectual gifts.

Among them mingled, distinguishable neither by costume nor language, a number of prominent patrons of art in the great Jewish community. Their principal, the alabarch, was talking eagerly with the philosopher Hegesias and the Rhodian leech Chrysippus, Queen Arsinoë's favourite, whom at Althea's instigation she had sent with Proclus to receive the returning traveller.

Sometimes all gazed toward the mouth of the harbour, where the expected ship must soon pass the recently completed masterpiece of Sos-

tratus, the towering lighthouse, still shining in its marble purity.

Soon many Alexandrians also crowded the large platform in front of the Temple of Poseidon, and the very wide marble staircase leading from it to the landing place.

Beneath the bronze statues of the Dioscuri, at the right and left of the topmost step, had also gathered the magnificent figures of the Ephebi and the younger men from the wrestling school of Timagetes, with garlands on their curling locks, as well as many younger artists and pupils of the older masters.

The statues of the gods and goddesses of the sea and their lofty pedestals, standing at the sides of the staircase, cast upon the marble steps, gleaming in the radiance of the morning sun, narrow shadows, which attracted the male and female chorus singers, who, also wearing beautiful garlands, had come to greet the expected arrival with solemn chants.

Several actors were just coming from rehearsal in the theatre of Dionysus, east of the Temple of Poseidon, of which, like all the stages in the city, Proclus was chief manager.

A pretty dancing girl, who hung on the arm of the youngest, extended her hand with a graceful gesture toward the staircase, and asked:

"Whom can they be expecting there? Probably some huge new animal for the Museum which has been caught somewhere for the King, for yonder stiff wearer of a laurel crown, who throws his head back as though he would like to eat the Olympians and take the King for a luncheon into the bargain, is Straton, the denier of the gods, and the little man with the bullet-head is the grammarian Zoilus."

"Of course," replied her companion. "But there, too, is Apollodorus, the alabarch of the Jews, and the heavy money-bag Archias——"

"Why look at them!" cried the younger mime. "It's far better worth while to stretch your neck for those farther in front. They are genuine friends of the Muses—the poets Theocritus and Zenodotus."

"The great Athene, Apollo, and all his nine Pierides, have sent their envoys," said the older actor pathetically, "for there, too, are the sculptors Euphranor and Chares, and the godlike builder of the lighthouse, Sostratus in person."

"A handsome man," cried the girl flute-player, "but vain, I tell you, vain——"

"Self-conscious, you ought to say," corrected her companion.

"Certainly," added the older actor, patting his smooth cheeks and chin with a rose he held

in his hand. "Who can defend himself against the highest merit, self-knowledge? But the person who is to have this reception, by the staff of Dionysus! if modesty flies away from him like the bird from a girl, it ought—— Just look there! The tall, broad-shouldered fellow yonder is Chrysippus, the right hand of Arsinoë, as our grammateus Proclus is her left. So probably some prince is expected."

"The gentlemen of the Museum and the great artists yonder would not stir a foot, far less lose so precious a morning hour, for any mere wearer of a crown or sceptre," protested the other actor; "it must be——"

"That the King or the Queen command it," interrupted the older player. "Only Arsinoë is represented here. Or do you see any envoy of Ptolemy? Perhaps they will yet arrive. If there were ambassadors of the great Roman Senate——"

"Or," added the dancer, "envoys from King Antiochus. But—goose that I am!—then they would not be received here, but in the royal harbour at the Lochias. See if I don't prove to be right! Divine honours are to be paid to some newly attracted hero of the intellect. But—just follow my finger! There—yonder—it comes floating along at the left of the island of

Antirrhodus. That may be his galley! Magnificent! Wonderfully beautiful! Brilliant! Like a swan! No, no, like a swimming peacock! And the silver embroidery on the blue sails! It glitters and sparkles like stars in the azure sky."

Meanwhile the elder actor, shading his eyes with his hand, had been gazing at the harbour, where, amid the innumerable vessels, the expected one, whose sails were just being reefed, was steered by a skilful hand. Now he interrupted the blond beauty with the exclamation: "It is Archias's Proserpina! I know it well." Then, in a declamatory tone, he continued: "I, too, was permitted on the deck of the glittering vessel, lightly rocked by the crimson waves, to reach my welcome goal; as the guest of peerless Archias, I mean. The most magnificent festival in his villa! There was a little performance there in which Mentor and I allowed ourselves to be persuaded to take part. But just see how the beautiful ship uses the narrow passage between the two triremes, as if it had the bloodleech's power of contraction! But to return to the festival of Archias: the oyster ragout served there, the pheasant pasties——"

Here he interrupted himself, exclaiming in surprise: "By the club of Hercules, the Proserpina is to be received with a full chorus! And

there is the owner himself descending the stairs! Whom is she bringing?"

"Come! come!" cried the dancing girl to her companion, dragging him after her, "I shall die of curiosity."

The singing and shouting of many voices greeted the actors as they approached the platform of the Temple of Poseidon.

When from this spot the dancer fixed her eyes upon the landing place, she suddenly dropped her companion's arm, exclaiming: "It is the handsome blind sculptor, Hermon, the heir of the wealthy Myrtilus. Do you learn this now for the first time, you jealous Thersites? Hail, hail, divine Hermon! Hail, noble victim of the ungrateful Olympians! Hail to thee, Hermon, and thy immortal works! Hail, hail, hail!"

Meanwhile she waved her handkerchief with frenzied eagerness, as if she could thus force the blind man to see her, and a group of actors whom Proclus, the grammateus of the Dionysian arts, had sent here to receive Hermon worthily, followed her example.

But her cries were drowned by the singing of the chorus and by thousands of shouting voices, while Hermon was embraced by Archias on board the galley, and then, by his guidance,

stepped on shore and ascended the staircase of the Temple of Poseidon.

Before the ship entered the harbour, the artist had had a large goblet of unmixed wine given to him, that he might conquer the emotion that had overpowered him.

Though his blind eyes did not show him even the faintest outline of a figure, he felt as if he was flooded with brilliant sunshine.

While the Proserpina was bearing him past the lighthouse, Gras told him that they had now reached the great harbour, and at the same time he heard the shouts, whistles, signals, and varying sounds of the landing place with its crowded shipping, and of the capital.

His blood surged in his veins, and before his mind rose the vision of the corn-flower blue sky, mirrored in the calm surface of the bluest of seas. The pharos built by Sostratus towered in dazzling whiteness above the tide, and before him rose the noble temple buildings, palaces, and porticoes of the city of Alexandria, with which he was familiar, and before and between them statue after statue of marble and bronze, the whole flooded with radiant golden light.

True, darkness sometimes swallowed this wonderful picture, but an effort of the will was sufficient to show it to him again.

"The Temple of Poseidon!" cried Gras. "The Proserpina is to land at the foot of the steps." And now Hermon listened to the sounds from the shore, whose hum and buzz transported him into the midst of the long-missed city of commerce, knowledge, and arts.

Then the captain's shouts of command fell imperiously upon his ears, the strokes of the oars ceased, their blades sank with a loud splash into the water, and at the same instant from the temple steps Hermon was greeted by the solemn notes of the chorus, from whose rhythm his own name rang forth again and again like so many shouts of victory.

He thought his heart would fairly burst through his arched chest, and the passionate violence of its throbbing did not lessen when Gras exclaimed: "Half Alexandria has assembled to greet you. Ah, if you could only see it! How the kerchiefs are waving! Laurel after laurel in every hand! All the distinguished people in the capital have gathered on the sacred soil of the Temple of Poseidon. There is Archias, too; there are the artists and the famous gentlemen of the Museum, the members of the Ephebi, and the priests of the great gods."

Hermon listened with his hand pressed on his breast, and while doing so the power of his

imagination showed the vast, harmoniously noble structure of the many-pillared Temple of Poseidon, surrounded by as many thousands as there were in reality hundreds. From all parts of the sanctuary, even from the tops of the roofs, he beheld laurel branches and kerchiefs waving and tossing, and wreaths flung on the ground before him. If this picture was correct, the whole city was greeting him, headed by the men whom he honoured as great and meritorious, and in front of them all Daphne, with drooping head, full of feminine grace and heart-winning goodness.

While the chorus continued their song, and the welcoming shouts grew louder, the brilliant picture faded away, but in return he felt friendly arms clasp him. First Archias, then Proclus, and after him a succession of fellow-artists—the greatest of all—drew him into a warm embrace.

Finally he felt himself led away, placed his feet as his Uncle Archias whispered directions, and as they gropingly obeyed them ascended the temple steps and stood in utter darkness upon the platform listening to the speeches which so many had prepared.

All the distinguished men in the city expressed their sympathy, their pity, their admiration, their hopes, or sent assurances of them to

him. The Rhodian Chrysippus, despatched by the Queen, delivered the wreath which the monarch bestowed, and informed Hermon, with her greetings, that Arsinoë deemed his Demeter worthy of the laurel.

The most famous masters of his art, the great scholars from the Museum, the whole priesthood of Demeter, which included Daphne, the servants of Apollo, his dear Ephebi, the comrades of his physical exercises—all whom he honoured, admired, loved—loaded him with praises and good wishes, as well as the assurance of their pride in numbering him among them.

No form, no colour from the visible world, penetrated the darkness surrounding him, not even the image of the woman he loved. Only his ears enabled him to receive the praises, honours, congratulations lavished here and, though he sometimes thought he had received enough, he again listened willingly and intently when a new speaker addressed him in warm words of eulogy. What share compassion for his unprecedentedly sorrowful fate had in this extravagantly laudatory and cordial greeting, he did not ask; he only felt with a throbbing heart that he now stood upon a summit which he had scarcely ventured to hope ever to attain. His

dreams of outward success which had not been realized, because he deemed it treason to his art to deviate from the course which he believed right and best adapted to it, he now, without having yielded to the demands of the old school, heard praised as his well-earned possessions.

He felt as if he breathed the lighter, purer air of the realms of the blessed, and the laurel crown which the Queen's envoy pressed upon his brow, the wreaths which his fellow-artists presented to him by hands no less distinguished than those of the great sculptor Protogenes, and Nicias, the most admired artist after the death of Apelles, seemed, like the wings on the hat and shoes of Hermes, messenger of the gods, to raise him out of himself and into the air.

Darkness surrounded him, yet a bright dazzling light issued from his soul and illluminated his whole being with the warm golden radiance of the sun.

Not even the faintest shadow dimmed it until Soteles, his fellow-student at Rhodes, who sustained him with ardent earnestness in the struggle to prefer truth to beauty, greeted him.

He welcomed him and wished that he might recover his lost sight as warmly as his predecessors. He praised the Demeter, too, but added that this was not the place to say what he missed

in her. Yet that she did lack it awakened in him an emotion of pain, for this, Hermon's last work, apparently gave the followers of the ancients a right to number him in their ranks.

His cautious expression of regret must refer to the head of his Demeter. Yet surely it was not his fault that Daphne's features bore the impress of that gentle, winning kindness which he himself and Soteles, imitating him, had often condemned as weak and characterless.

The correctness of his belief was instantly proved to him by the address of gray-haired, highly praised Euphranor, who spoke of the Demeter's countenance with warm admiration. And how ardently the poets Theocritus and Zenodotus extolled his work to the skies!

Amid so much laudation, one faint word of dissatisfaction vanished like a drop of blood that falls into a clear stream.

The welcome concluded with a final chant by the chorus, and continued to echo in Hermon's ears as he entered his uncle's chariot and drove away with him, crowned with laurel and intoxicated as if by fiery wine.

Oh, if he could only have seen his fellow-citizens who so eagerly expressed their good will, their sympathy, their admiration! But the black and coloured mist before his eyes revealed

no human figure, not even that of the woman he loved, who, he now learned for the first time from her father, had appeared among the priestesses of Demeter to greet him.

Doubtless he was gladdened by the sound of her voice, the clasp of her hand, the faint fragrance of violets exhaling from her fair hair, which he had often remembered with so much pleasure when alone in Tennis; but the time to devote himself to her fully and completely had not yet come, for what manifold and powerful impressions, how much that was elevating, delightful, and entertaining awaited him immediately!

The Queen's envoy had expressed his mistress's desire to receive the creator of the Demeter, the Ephebi and his fellow-artists had invited him to a festival which they desired to give in his honour, and on the way Archias informed him that many of his wealthy friends in the Macedonian Council expected that he, the honoured hero of the day, would adorn with his presence a banquet in their houses.

What a rich, brilliant life awaited him in spite of his blindness! When he entered his uncle's magnificent city home, and not only all the servants and clients of the family, but also a select party of ladies and gentlemen greeted

him with flowers and hundreds of other tokens of affection and appreciation, he gave himself up without reserve to this novel excess of fame and admiration.

Notwithstanding his blindness, he felt, after the burns on his face had healed, thoroughly well, as strong as a giant—nay, more vigorous and capable of enjoyment than ever. What prevented him from revelling to the full in the superabundant gifts which Fate, recently so cruel, now suddenly cast into his lap with lavish kindness?

Yet many flattering and pleasant things as he had experienced that day, he was far from feeling satiety. On entering the hall of the men in his uncle's dwelling, the names of famous men and proud beauties had been repeated to him. Formerly they had taken little notice of him, yet now even the most renowned received him like an Olympian victor.

What did all these vain women really care for him? Yet their favour was part of the triumph whose celebration he must permit today. His heart held but one being for whom it yearned, and with whom thus far he had been able only to exchange a few tender greetings.

The time for a long conversation had not yet arrived, but he asked Thyone to lead him

to her and, while she listened anxiously, described with feverish animation the incidents of the last few days. But he soon lowered his voice to assure her that he had not ceased to think of her even for a single hour, and the feeling of happiness which, in spite of his misfortune, had filled and lent wings to his soul, was not least due to the knowledge of being near her again.

And her presence really benefited him almost as much as he had anticipated during the hours of solitary yearning in Tennis; he felt it a great favour of Fate to be permitted to strive to possess her, felt even during the delirium of this reception that he loved her. What a tremendous longing to clasp her at once in his arms as his betrothed bride overwhelmed him; but her father's opposition to the union of his only child with a blind man must first be conquered, and the great agitation in his soul, as well as the tumult around him, seemed like a mockery of the quiet happiness which hovered before him when he thought of his marriage with Daphne. Not until everything was calmer would the time come to woo her. Until then both must be satisfied with knowing from each other's lips their mutual love, and he thought he perceived in the tone of her voice the deep emotion of her heart.

Perhaps this had prevented Daphne's expressing her congratulations upon the success of his Demeter as eagerly and fully as he had expected. Painfully disturbed by her reserve, he had just attempted to induce her to give a less superficial opinion of his work, when the curtains of the dining room parted—the music of flutes, singing, and pleasant odours greeted him and the guests. Archias summoned them to breakfast, and a band of beautiful boys, with flowers and garlands of ivy, obeyed the command to crown them.

Then Thyone approached the newly united pair and, after exchanging a few words with Daphne, whispered in an agitated voice to the blind sculptor, over whose breast a brown-locked young slave was just twining a garland of roses: "Poverty no longer stands between you and the object of your love; is it Nemesis who even now still seals your lips?"

Hermon stretched out his hand to draw her nearer to him and murmur softly that her counsel had aided him to break the power of the terrible goddess, but he grasped the empty air. At the same time the deep voice of his love's father, whose opposition threatened to cloud his new happiness, singing, flute-playing, and the laughter of fair women greeted him and, only

half master of his own will, he assented, by a slight bend of the head, to the matron's question. A light shiver ran through his frame with the speed of lightning, and the Epicurean's maxim that fear and cold are companions darted through his brain. But what should he fear? He had endured severe trials, it is true, for the sake of remaining faithful to truth in art and life; but who probably ever reached the age of manhood without once deviating from it? Besides, he was surely aware that, had he been obliged to answer Thyone in words, he would not have been guilty of the falsehood. His reply had consisted of a slight motion of the head, and it negatived nothing; it was merely intended to defer for a short time the thing he most desired.

Yet the rash answer weighed heavily on his mind; but it could no longer be recalled that day, and was believed, for Thyone whispered, "We shall succeed in reconciling the terrible being."

Again the light tremour ran through him, but it lasted only an instant; for Chrysilla, the representative of the dead mistress of the house, whose duty it was to assign the guests their places, called to Hermon, "The beautiful Glycera does you the honour of choosing you for a neighbour" and, before the sentence was finished,

Archias himself seized his arm and led him to the cushions at the side of the much-courted beauty.

The guests began the banquet in a very joyous mood.

Greek gaiety, and the quick intellect and keen wit of the Alexandrians, combined with the choicest viands of the luxurious capital, where the wines and dainties of all the countries of the Mediterranean found sellers and buyers, and the cook's vocation was developed into a fine art, to spice this banquet with a hundred charms for the mind and senses. To-day the principal place in this distinguished circle of famous men, great and wealthy nobles, beautiful and aristocratic women, was awarded to the blind sculptor. He was pledged by every one who had admired his Demeter, who compassionated his sad fate, or who desired to be agreeable to him or his host.

Every kind remark about his person, his blindness, and his masterpiece was repeated to him and, after the wine and the effort to attract Daphne's attention and shine in the presence of his beautiful neighbour had heated and winged his thoughts, he found an apt reply to each noteworthy word.

When the dessert was finally eaten, and after

sunset, in the brilliant light of the lamps and candles, greater attention was paid to the mixing vessels, all remained silent to listen to his fervid speech.

Glycera had asked him, at the beginning of the banquet, to tell her about the attack in Tennis. Now he yielded to her wish that he should repeat the captivating tale to the others, and the spirits of the wine helped him to perform the task with such animation that his hearers listened to his description in breathless suspense, and many eyes rested on the handsome face of the great blind artist as if spellbound.

When he paused, loud applause rewarded him, and as it reached him from every part of the spacious room, his deep, resonant voice put him in communication even with the more distant guests, and he might have been taken for the symposiarch or director of the banquet.

This conspicuous position of the fêted artist did not please every one, and a rhetorician, famed for his sharp tongue, whispered to his neighbour, one of Hermon's older fellow-artists, "What his eyes have lost seems to benefit his tongue." The sculptor answered: "At any rate, the impetuous young artist might succeed better

in proving himself, by its assistance, a good entertainer, than in creating more mediocre masterpieces like the Demeter."

Similar remarks were made on other cushions; but when the philosopher Hegesias asked the famous sculptor Euphranor what he thought of Hermon's Demeter, the kindly old man answered, "I should laud this noble work as a memorable event, even if it did not mark the end, as well as the beginning, of its highly gifted creator's new career."

Nothing of this kind was uttered near Hermon. Everything that reached him expressed delight, admiration, sympathy, and hope. At dessert the beautiful Glycera divided her apple, whispering as she gave him one half, "Let the fruit tell you what the eyes can no longer reveal, you poor and yet so abundantly rich darling of the gods."

He murmured in reply that his happiness would awake the envy of the immortals if, in addition, he were permitted to feast upon the sight of her beauty.

Had he been able to see himself, Hermon, who, as a genuine Greek, was accustomed to moderate his feelings in intercourse with others, would have endeavoured to express the emotions of joy which filled his heart with more re-

serve, and to excel his companions at the festival less recklessly.

His enthusiastic delight carried many away with him; others, especially Daphne, were filled with anxious forebodings by his conduct, and others still with grave displeasure.

Among the latter was the famous leech Erasistratus, who shared Archias's cushions, and had been solicited by the latter to try to restore his blind nephew's sight. But the kindly physician, who gladly aided even the poorest sufferer, curtly and positively refused. To devote his time and skill to a blind man who, under the severest of visitations, lulled himself so contentedly in happiness, he considered unjust to others who desired recovery more ardently.

"When the intoxication of this unbridled strength passes away, and is followed by a different mood," remarked the merchant, "we will talk of this matter again," and the confident tone of his deep voice gave the simple sentence such significance that the learned leech held out his hand, saying: "Only where deep, earnest longing for recovery fills the sufferer's mind will the gods aid the physician. We will wait for the change which you predict, Archias!"

The guests did not disperse until late, and the best satisfied of all was the grammateus Pro-

clus, who had taken advantage of the rich merchant's happy mood, and his own warm intercession in behalf of his nephew's work, to persuade Archias to advance Queen Arsinoë a large sum of money for an enterprise whose object he still carefully concealed.

The highly honoured blind artist spent the night under his uncle's roof.

CHAPTER VI.

HERMON rose from his couch the next morning alert and ready for new pleasures.

He had scarcely left the bath when envoys from the Ephebi and the younger artists invited him to the festivities which they had arranged in his honour. He joyously accepted, and also promised messengers from many of Archias's friends, who wished to have the famous blind sculptor among their guests, to be present at their banquets.

He still felt as if he were intoxicated, and found neither disposition nor time for quiet reflection. His great strength, fettered as it were by his loss of sight, now also began to stir. Fate itself withheld him from the labour which he loved, yet in return it offered him a wealth of varying pleasure, whose stimulating power he had learned the day before. He still relished the draught from the beaker of homage proffered by his fellow-citizens; nay, it seemed as if it could not lose its sweetness for a long time.

He joined the ladies before noon, and his newly awakened feeling of joy beamed upon them scarcely less radiantly than yesterday. Though Thyone might wonder that a man pursued by Nemesis could allow himself to be borne along so thoughtlessly by the stream of pleasure, Daphne certainly did not grudge him the festal season which, when it had passed, could never return to the blind artist. When it was over, he would yearn for the quiet happiness at her side, which gazed at him like the calm eyes of the woman he loved. With her he would cast anchor for the remainder of his life; but first must come the period when he enjoyed the compensation now awarded to him for such severe sufferings.

His heart was full of joy as he greeted Daphne and the Lady Thyone, whom he found with her; but his warm description of the happy emotion which had overpowered him at the abundant honours lavished upon him was interrupted by Archias.

In his usual quick, brisk manner, he asked whether Hermon wished to occupy the beautiful villa with the magnificent garden on Lake Mareotis, inherited from Myrtilus, which could scarcely be reached in a vehicle from the Brucheium in less than an hour, or the house situ-

ated in the centre of the city, and Hermon promptly decided in favour of the latter.

His uncle, and probably the ladies also, had expected the contrary. Their silence showed this plainly enough, and Hermon therefore added in a tone of explanation that later the villa would perhaps suit his condition better, but now he thought it would be a mistake to retire to the quiet which half the city was conspiring to disturb. No one contradicted him, and he left the women's apartment with a slight feeling of vexation, which, however, was soon jested away by the gay friends who sought him.

When he removed to the city house the next day, he had not yet found time for a serious talk with Daphne. His uncle, who had managed the estate of Myrtilus, and wished to give Hermon an account of his inheritance, was refused by the blind artist, who assured him that he knew Archias had greatly increased rather than diminished his property, and thanked him sincerely and warmly. In the convenient and spacious city house the young sculptor very soon thought he had good reason to be satisfied with his choice.

Most of his friends were busy artists, and what loss of time every visit to the remote villa would have imposed upon them, what haste

he himself would have been obliged to use to reach home from the bath, where he often spent many hours, from the wrestling school, from the meetings of fashionable people in the Paneum gardens, and at sunset by the seashore on the royal highway in the Brucheium. All these places were very far from the villa. It would have required whole hours, too, to reach a famous cookshop in the Canopus, at whose table he liked to assemble beloved guests or revel with his friends. The theatre, the Odeum, most of the public buildings, as well as the houses of his best friends, and especially the beautiful Glycera, were easily reached from his city home, and, among the temples, that of Demeter, which he often visited to pray, offer sacrifices, and rejoice in the power of attraction which his statue of the goddess exerted upon the multitude. It stood at the back of the cella in a place accessible to the priesthood alone, visible only through the open doors, upon a pedestal which his fellow-artists pronounced rather too high. Yet his offer to have it made smaller was not accepted, because had it been lower the devout supplicants who stood there to pray could not have raised their eyes to it.

It was not only at the festivals of the dead that he went to the Greek cemetery, where he

had had a magnificent monument erected for his dead mother. If his head ached after a nocturnal carouse, or the disagreeable alarming chill stole over him which he had felt for the first time when he falsely answered Thyone that he was still under the ban of Nemesis, he went to the family monuments, supplied them with gifts, had sacrifices offered to the souls of the beloved dead, and in this way sometimes regained a portion of his lost peace of mind.

The banquet in the evening always dispelled whatever still oppressed him on his return home from these visits, for, though months had elapsed since his brilliant reception, he was still numbered, especially in artist circles, with the most honoured men; he, the blind man, no longer stood in any one's way; conversation gained energy and meaning through the vivacity of his fervid intellect, which seemed actually deepened by his blindness when questions concerning art were at issue, and from a modest fellow-struggler he had become a patron bestowing orders.

The sculptor Soteles, who had followed his footsteps since the apprenticeship in Rhodes, was intrusted with the erection of the monument to Myrtilus in Tennis, and another highly gifted young sculptor, who pursued his former course, with the execution of the one to his mother.

From a third he ordered a large new mixing vessel of chased silver for the society of Ephebi, whose members had lauded him, at the magnificent festival given in his honour, with genuine youthful fervour.

In the designs for these works his rich and bold gift of invention and the power of his imagination proved their full value, and even his older fellow-artists followed him with sincere admiration when, in spite of his darkened eyes, he brought before them distinctly, and often even with the charcoal or wax tablet in his hand, what he had in mind. What magnificent things might not this man have created had he retained his sight, what masterpieces might not have been expected! and his former works, which had been condemned as unlovely, offensive, and exaggerated, were now loudly admired; nay, the furious Mænads struggling on the ground and the Street Boy Eating Figs, which were no longer his property, were sold at high prices. No meeting of artists was complete without Hermon, and the great self-possession which success and wealth bestowed, besides his remarkable talent and the energy peculiar to him, soon aided him to great influence among the members of his profession; nay, he would speedily have reached the head of their leaders had not the passionate

impetuosity of his warlike nature led the more cautious to seek to restrain the powerful enthusiast.

Archias's wealthy friends had no such apprehension. To them the lauded blind artist was not much more than a costly dish certain to please their guests; yet this, too, was no trifle in social circles which spent small fortunes for a rare fish.

At the banquets of these princes of commerce he often met Daphne, still more frequently the beautiful Glycera, whose husband, an old ship-owner of regal wealth, was pleased to see famous men harnessed to his young wife's chariot of victory. Hermon's heart had little to do with the flirtation to which Glycera encouraged him at every new meeting, and the Thracian Althea only served to train his intellect to sharp debates. But in this manner he so admirably fulfilled her desire to attract attention that she more than once pointed out to the Queen, her relative, the remarkably handsome blind man whose acquaintance she had made on a night of mad revel during the last Dionysia but one. Althea even thought it necessary to win him, in whom she saw the future son-in-law of the wealthy Archias, for through the grammateus Proclus the merchant had been persuaded

to advance the King's wife hundreds of talents, and Arsinoë cherished plans which threatened to consume other large sums.

Thyone watched Hermon's conduct with increasing indignation, while Daphne perceived that these women had no more power to estrange her lover from her than the bedizened beauties who were never absent from the artists' festivals. How totally different was his intercourse with her! His love and respect were hers alone; yet she saw in him a soul-sick man, and persistently rejected Philotas, who wooed her with the same zeal as before, and the other suitors who were striving to win the wealthy heiress. She had confessed her feelings to her father, her best friend, and persuaded him to have patience a little longer, and wait for the change which he himself expected in his nephew.

This had not been difficult, for Archias loved Hermon, in spite of the many anxieties he had caused him, as if he were his own son and, knowing his daughter, he was aware that she could be happy with the man who possessed her heart though he was deprived of sight.

The fame which Hermon had won by great genius and ability had gratified him more than he expressed, and he could not contradict Daphne when she asserted that, in spite of the aim-

less life of pleasure to which he devoted himself, he had remained the kind-hearted, noble man he had always been.

In fact, he used, unasked and secretly, a considerable portion of his large revenues to relieve the distress of the poor and suffering. Archias learned this as the steward of his nephew's property, and when to do good he made new demands upon him, he gladly fulfilled them; only he constantly admonished the blind man to think of his own severe sufferings and his cure. Daphne did the same, and he willingly obeyed her advice; for, loudly and recklessly as he pursued pleasure in social circles, he showed himself tenderly devoted to her when he found her alone in her father's house. Then, as in better days, he opened his heart to her naturally and modestly and, though he refrained from vows of love, he showed her that he did not cease to seek with her, and her alone, what his noisy pleasures denied. Then he also found the old tone of affection, and of late he came more frequently, and what he confided to no one else implied to her, at least by hints.

Satiety and dissatisfaction were beginning to appear, and what he had attempted to do for the cure of his eyes had hitherto been futile. The remedies of the oculists to whom he had been

directed by Daphne herself had proved ineffectual. The great physician Erasistratus, from whom he first sought help, had refrained, at her entreaty and her father's, from refusing to aid him, but indignantly sent him away when he persisted in the declaration that it would be impossible for him to remain for months secluded from all society and subsist for weeks on scanty fare.

He would submit even to that, he assured Daphne, after she represented to him what he was losing by such lack of resignation, when the time of rest had come for which he longed, but from which many things still withheld him. Yesterday the King had invited him to the palace for the first time, and to decline such an honour was impossible.

In fact, he had long wished for this summons, because he had been informed that no representative of the sovereign had been present at his reception. Only his wife Arsinoë had honoured him by a wreath and congratulations. This lack of interest on the part of the King had wounded him, and the absence of an invitation from the royal connoisseur had cast a shadow into the midst of many a mirthful hour. He had doubtless been aware what great and important affairs of state were claiming the con-

scientious sovereign just at this time, and how almost unbearable his restless, unloving spouse was rendering his domestic life; yet Hermon thought Ptolemy might have spared a short time for an event in the art life of the city, as his Demeter had been called hundreds of times.

Now the long-desired command to appear before the sovereign had finally reached him, and, in the secure belief that it would bring fresh recognition and rare honours, he entered the royal palace.

Proclus, who neglected no opportunity of serving the nephew of the rich man whose aid he constantly required for the Queen's finances, was his guide, and described the decoration of the inner apartments of the royal residence. Their unostentatious simplicity showed the refined taste of their royal occupant. There was no lack of marble and other rare kinds of stone, and the numerous bas-reliefs which covered the walls like the most superb tapestry were worthy of special attention. In the oblong apartment through which the blind man was guided these marble pictures represented in magnificent work scenes from the campaigns in which Ptolemy, the King's father, had participated as Alexander's general. Others showed Athene, Apollo,

the Muses, and Hermes, surrounding or hastening toward the throne of the same monarch, and others again Greek poets and philosophers. Magnificent coloured mosaic pictures covered the floor and many flat spaces above door and windows, but gold and silver had been sparingly used.

Masterpieces of painting and sculpture were the ornaments of the room. In the ante-chamber, where Hermon waited for the King, Proclus mentioned one of the finest statues of Alexander by Lysippus, and an exquisite Eros by Praxiteles.

The period of waiting, however, became so long to the spoiled artist that he anticipated the monarch's appearance with painful discomfort, and the result of the few minutes which Ptolemy II devoted to his reception was far behind the hopes he had fixed upon them.

In former days he had often seen the narrow-shouldered man of barely medium height who, to secure his own safety, had had two brothers killed and sent another into exile, but now ruled Egypt shrewdly and prudently, and developed the prosperity of Alexandria with equal energy and foresight.

Now, for the first time, Hermon heard him speak. He could not deny that his voice was

unusually pleasant in tone, yet it unmistakably issued from the lips of a sufferer.

The brief questions with which he received the blind artist were kindly, and as natural as though addressing an equal, and every remark made in connection with Hermon's answers revealed a very quick and keen intellect.

He had seen the Demeter, and praised the conception of the goddess because it corresponded with her nature. The sanctity which, as it were, pervaded the figure of the divine woman pleased him, because it made the supplicants in the temple feel that they were in the presence of a being who was elevated far above them in superhuman majesty.

"True," he added, "your Demeter is by no means a powerful helper in time of need. She is a goddess such as Epicurus imagines the immortals. Without interfering with human destiny, she stands above it in sublime grandeur and typical dignity. You belong, if I see correctly, to the Epicureans?"

"No," replied Hermon. "Like my lord and King, I, too, number myself among the pupils of the wise Straton."

"Indeed?" asked Ptolemy in a drawling tone, at the same time casting a glance of astonishment at the blind man's powerful figure and

well-formed, intellectual face. Then he went on eagerly: "I shall scarcely be wrong in the inference that you, the creator of the Fig-eater, had experienced a far-reaching mental change before your unfortunate loss of sight?"

"I had to struggle hard," replied Hermon, "but I probably owe the success of the Demeter to the circumstance that I found a model whose mind and nature correspond with those of the goddess to a rare degree."

The monarch shook his fair head, and protested in a tone of positive superior knowledge: "As to the model, however well selected it may be, it was not well chosen for this work, far less for you. I have watched your battle against beauty in behalf of truth, and rejoiced, though I often saw you and your little band of young disciples shoot beyond the mark. You brought something new, whose foundation seemed to me sound, and on which further additions might be erected. When the excrescences fell off, I thought, this Hermon, his shadow Soteles, and the others who follow him will perhaps open new paths to the declining art which is constantly going back to former days. Our time will become the point of departure of a new art. But for that very reason, let me confess it, I regret to see you fall back from your bold ad-

vance. You now claim for your work that it cleaves strictly to Nature, because the model is taken from life itself. It does not become me to doubt this, yet the stamp of divinity which your Demeter bears is found in no mortal woman. Understand me correctly! This is certainly no departure from the truth, for the ideal often deserves this lofty name better than anything the visible world offers to the eye; but hitherto you have done honour to another truth. If I comprehend your art aright, its essence is opposed to the addition of superhuman dignity and beauty, with which you, or the model you used, strove to ennoble and deify your Demeter. Admirably as you succeeded in doing so, it forces your work out of the sphere of reality, whose boundary I never before saw you cross by a single inch. Whether this occurred unconsciously to you in an hour of mental ecstasy, or whether you felt that you still lacked the means to represent the divine, and therefore returned to the older methods, I do not venture to decide. But at the first examination of your work I was conscious of one thing: It means for you a revolution, a rupture with your former aspirations; and as—I willingly confess it—you had been marvellously successful, it would have driven you, had your sight been spared, out of

your own course and into the arms of the ancients, perhaps to your material profit, but scarcely to the advantage of art, which needs a renewal of its vital energies."

"Let me assure you, my lord," Hermon protested, "that had I remained able to continue to create, the success of the Demeter would never, never have rendered me faithless to the conviction and method of creation which I believed right; nay, before losing my sight, my whole soul was absorbed in a new work which would have permitted me to remain wholly and completely within the bounds of reality."

"The Arachne?" asked the King.

"Yes, my lord," cried Hermon ardently. "With its completion I expected to render the greatest service, not only to myself, but to the cause of truth."

Here Ptolemy interrupted with icy coldness: "Yet you were certainly wrong; at least, if the Thracian Althea, who is the personification of falsehood, had continued to be the model." Then he changed his tone, and with the exclamation: "You are protected from the needs of life, unless your rich uncle throws his property into the most insatiable of gulfs. May Straton's philosophy help you better to sustain your courage in the darkness which surrounds

you than it has aided me to bear other trials!" he left the room.

Thus ended the artist's conversation with the King, from which Hermon had expected such great results and, deeply agitated, he ordered the driver of his horses to take him to Daphne. She was the only person to whom he could confide what disappointment this interview had caused him.

Others had previously reproached him, as the King had just done, with having, in the Demeter, become faithless to his artistic past. How false and foolish this was! Many a remark from the critics would have been better suited to Myrtilus's work than to his. Yet his fear in Tennis had not been true. Only Daphne's sweet face did not suit his more vigorous method of emphasizing distinctions.

What a many-hued chameleon was the verdict upon works of plastic art! Once—on his return to the capital—thousands had united in the same one, and now how widely they differed again!

His earlier works, which were now lauded to the skies, had formerly invited censure and vehement attacks.

What would he not have given for the possibility of seeing his admired work once more!

As his way led past the Temple of Demeter, he stopped near it and was guided to the sanctuary.

It was filled with worshippers, and when, in his resolute manner, he told the curator and the officiating priest that he wished to enter the cella, and asked for a ladder to feel the goddess, he was most positively refused.

What he requested seemed a profanation of the sacred image, and it would not do to disturb the devout throng. His desire to lower the pedestal could not be gratified.

The high priest who came forward upheld his subordinates and, after a short dispute, Hermon left the sanctuary with his wish unfulfilled.

Never had he so keenly lamented his lost vision as during the remainder of the drive, and when Daphne received him he described with passionate lamentation how terribly blindness embittered his life, and declared himself ready to submit to the severest suffering to regain his sight.

She earnestly entreated him to apply to the great physician Erasistratus again, and Hermon willingly consented. He had promised to attend a banquet given that day by the wealthy ship-owner Archon. The feast lasted until early morning, but toward noon Hermon again ap-

peared in his uncle's house, and met Daphne full of joyous confidence, as if he were completely transformed.

While at Archon's table he had determined to place his cure in the hands of higher powers. This was the will of Fate; for the guest whose cushion he shared was Silanus, the host's son, and the first thing he learned from him was the news that he was going the next day, with several friends, to the oracle of Amon in the Libyan Desert, to ask it what should be done for his mother, who had been for several years an invalid whom no physician could help. He had heard from many quarters that the counsel of the god, who had greeted Alexander the Great as his son, was infallible.

Then Hermon had been most urgently pressed by the young man to accompany him. Every comfort would be provided. One of his father's fine ships would convey them to Parætonium, where tents, saddle horses, and guides for the short land journey would be ready.

So he had promised to go with Silanus, and his decision was warmly approved by his uncle, Daphne, and the gray-haired Pelusinian couple. Perhaps the god would show the blind man the right path to recovery. He would always be able

to call the skill of the Alexandrian leeches to his aid.

Soon after Hermon went on board Archon's splendidly equipped vessel and, instead of a tiresome journey, began a new and riotous period of festivity.

Lavish provision had been made for gay companions of both sexes, merry entertainment by means of dancing, music, and song, well-filled dishes and mixing vessels, and life during the ride through the coast and desert regions was not less jovial and luxurious than on the ship.

It seemed to the blind man like one vast banquet in the dark, interrupted only by sleep.

The hope of counsel from the gods cheered the depressed mood which had weighed upon him for several weeks, and rich young Silanus praised the lucky fate which had enabled him to find a travelling companion whose intellect and wit charmed him and the others, and often detained them over the wine until late into the night.

Here, too, Hermon felt himself the most distinguished person, the animating and attracting power, until it was said that the voyage was over, and the company pitched their tents in the famous oasis near the Temple of Amon.

The musicians and dancers, with due regard to propriety, had been left behind in the seaport of Parætonium. Yet the young travellers were sufficiently gay while Silanus and Hermon waited for admission to the place of the oracle. A week after their arrival it was opened to them, yet the words repeated to them by the priest satisfied neither Hermon nor Archon's son, for the oracle advised the latter to bring his mother herself to the oasis by the land road if she earnestly desired recovery, while to Hermon was shouted the ambiguous saying:

"Only night and darkness spring from the rank marsh of pleasure;
Morning and day rise brightly from the starving sand."

Could Silanus's mother, who was unable to move, endure the desert journey? And what was the meaning of the sand, from which morning and day—which was probably the fresh enjoyment of the light—were to rise for Hermon?

The sentence of the oracle weighed heavily upon him, as well as on Archon's son, who loved his mother, and the homeward journey became to the blind man by no means a cheerful but rather a very troubled dream.

Thoughtful, deeply disturbed, dissatisfied with himself, and resolved to turn his back upon

the dreary life of pleasure which for so long a time had allowed him no rest, and now disgusted him, he kept aloof from his travelling companions, and rejoiced when, at Alexandria, he was led ashore in the harbour of Eunostus.

CHAPTER VII.

HERMON entered his house with drooping head.

Here he was informed that the grammateus of the Dionysian artists had already called twice to speak to him concerning an important matter. When he came from the bath, Proclus visited him again. His errand was to invite him to a banquet which was to take place that evening at his residence in a wing of the royal palace.

But Hermon was not in the mood to share a joyous revel, and he frankly said so, although immediately after his return he had accepted the invitation to the festival which the whole fellowship of artists would give the following day in honour of the seventieth birthday of the old sculptor Euphranor. The grammateus alluded to this, and most positively insisted that he could not release him; for he came not only by his own wish, but in obedience to the command of Queen Arsinoë, who desired to tell the creator of the Demeter how highly she esteemed his work and

his art. She would appear herself at dessert, and the banquet must therefore begin at an unusually early hour. He, Proclus, was to have the high honour of including the royal lady among his guests solely on Hermon's account, and his refusal would be an insult to the Queen.

So the artist found himself obliged to relinquish his opposition. He did this reluctantly; but the Queen's attention to him and his art flattered his vanity and, if he was to abandon the intoxicating and barren life of pleasure, it could scarcely be done more worthily than at a festival where the King's consort intended to distinguish him in person.

The banquet was to begin in a few hours, yet he could not let the day pass without seeing Daphne and telling her the words of the oracle. He longed, with ardent yearning, for the sound of her voice, and still more to unburden his sorely troubled soul to her.

Oh, if only his Myrtilus still walked among the living! How totally different, in spite of his lost vision, would his life have been!

Daphne was now the only one whom he could put in his place.

Since his return from the oracle, the fear that the rescued Demeter might yet be the work of Myrtilus had again mastered him. However

loudly outward circumstances might oppose this, he now felt, with a certainty which surprised him, that this work was not his own. The approval, as well as the doubts, which it aroused in others strengthened his opinion, although even now he could not succeed in bringing it into harmony with the facts. How deep had been the intoxication in which he had so long reeled from one day to the next, since it had succeeded in keeping every doubt of the authorship of this work far from him!

Now he must obtain certainty, and Daphne could help him to it; for, as a priestess of Demeter, she possessed the right to procure him access to the cella and get permission for him to climb the lofty pedestal and feel the statue with his fingers, whose sense of touch had become much keener.

He would frankly inform her of his fear, and her truthful nature would find the doubt that gnawed his heart as unendurable as he himself.

It would have been a grave crime to woo her before he was relieved of this uncertainty, and he would utter the decisive words that very day, and ask her whether her love was great enough to share the joys and sorrows of life with him, the blind man, who perhaps must also divest himself of a false fame.

Time pressed.

He called at Archias's house with a wreath on his head and in festal robes; but Daphne was in the temple, whither old Philippus and Thyone had gone, and his uncle was attending a late session of the Council.

He would have liked to follow Daphne to the sanctuary, but the late hour forbade it, and he therefore only charged Gras to tell his young mistress that he was going to Proclus's banquet, and would return early the next morning to discuss a most important subject with her.

Then he went directly to the neighbouring palace. The Queen might have appeared already, and it would not do to keep her waiting.

He was aware that she lived at variance with her husband, but how could he have suspected that she cherished the more than bold design of hurling the sovereign from his throne and seizing the Egyptian crown herself.

Proclus and Althea were among the conspirators who supported Arsinoë, and the Queen thought it would be an easy matter to win over to her cause and herself the handsome sculptor, whom she remembered at the last Dionysia.

The wealthy blind artist, so highly esteemed among the members of his profession, might become valuable to the conspiracy, for she knew

what enthusiastic devotion the Alexandrian artists felt for the King, and everything depended upon forming a party in her own favour among them. This task was to fall to Hermon, and also another, still more important one; for he, his nephew and future son-in-law, if any one, could persuade the wealthy Archias to lend the plot his valuable aid. Hitherto the merchant had been induced, it is true, to advance large sums of money to the Queen, but the loyal devotion which he showed to her royal husband had rendered it impossible to give him even a hint of the conspiracy. Althea, however, declared that the blind man's marriage to Daphne was only a question of time, and Proclus added that the easily excited nephew would show himself more pliant than the uncle if Arsinoë exerted upon him the irresistible charm of her personality.

When Hermon entered the residence of the grammateus in the palace, the guests had already assembled. The Queen was not to appear until after the feast, when the mixing jars were filled. The place by Hermon's side, which Althea had chosen for herself, would then be given up to Arsinoë.

The sovereign was as unaccustomed to the society of a blind artist as Hermon was to that

of a queen, and both eagerly anticipated the approaching meeting.

Yet it was difficult for Hermon to turn a bright face toward his companion. The sources of anxiety and grief which had previously burdened his mind would not vanish, even under the roof of the royal palace.

Althea's presence reminded him of Tennis, Ledscha, and Nemesis, who for so long a time seemed to have suspended her persecution, but since he had returned from the abode of the oracle was again asserting the old right to him. During many a sleepless hour of the night he had once more heard the rolling of her terrible wheel.

Even before the journey to the oasis of Amon, everything life could offer him, the idle rake, in his perpetual darkness, had seemed shallow and scarcely worth stretching out his hand for it.

True, an interesting conversation still had power to charm him, but often during its continuance the full consciousness of his misfortune forced itself upon his mind; for the majority of the subjects discussed by the artists came to them through the medium of sight, and referred to new creations of architecture, sculpture, and painting, from whose enjoyment his blindness debarred him.

When returning home from a banquet, if his way lay through the city, he was reminded of the superb buildings, marble terraces and fountains, statues and porticoes, which had formerly satiated his eyes with delight, and must now be illumined with a brilliant radiance by the morning sunbeams, though a hostile fate shut them out from his eyes, starving and thirsting for beautiful forms.

But it had seemed to him still harder to bear that his blinded eyes refused to show him the most beautiful of all beautiful things, the human form, when he lingered among the Ephebi or the spectators of a festal procession, or visited the gymnasium, the theatre, the Aphrodisium, or the Paneum gardens, where the beautiful women met at sunset.

The Queen was to appear immediately, and when she took her place near him his blindness would again deprive him of the sight of her delicately cut features, prevent his returning the glances from her sparkling eyes, and admiring the noble outlines of her thinly veiled figure.

Would his troubled spirit at least permit him to enjoy and enter without restraint into the play of her quick wit?

Perhaps her arrival would relieve him from the discomfort which oppressed him here.

A stranger, out of his own sphere, he felt chilled among these closely united men and women, to whom no tie bound him save the presence of the same host.

He was not acquainted with a single individual except the mythograph Crates, who for several months had been one of the members of the Museum, and who had attached himself to Hermon at Straton's lectures.

The artist was surprised to find this man in such a circle, but he learned from Althea that the young member of the Museum was a relative of Proclus, and a suitor of the beautiful Nico, one of the Queen's ladies in waiting, who was among the guests.

Crates had really been invited in order to win him over to the Queen's cause; but charming fair-haired Nico had been commissioned by the conspirators to persuade him to sing Arsinoë's praises among his professional associates.

The rest of the men present stood in close connection with Arsinoë, and were fellow-conspirators against her husband's throne and life. The ladies whom Proclus had invited were all confidants of Arsinoë, the wives and daughters of his other guests. All were members of the highest class of society, and their manners

showed the entire freedom from restraint that existed in the Queen's immediate circle.

Althea profited by the advantage of being Hermon's only acquaintance here. So, when he took his place on the cushion at her side, she greeted him familiarly and cordially, as she had treated him for a long time, wherever they met, and in a low voice told him, sometimes in a kindly tone, sometimes with biting sarcasm, the names and characters of the other guests.

The most aristocratic was Amyntas, who stood highest of all in the Queen's favour because he had good reason to hate the other Arsinoë, the sister of the King. His son had been this royal dame's first husband, and she had deserted him to marry Lysimachus, the aged King of Thrace.

The Rhodian Chrysippus, her leech and trusted counsellor, also possessed great influence over the Queen.

"The noble lady," whispered Althea, "needs the faithful devotion of every well-disposed subject, for perhaps you have already learned how cruelly the King embitters the life of the mother of his three children. Many a caprice can be forgiven the suffering Ptolemy, who recently expressed a wish that he could change places with the common workmen whom he saw eating their

meal with a good appetite, and who is now tortured by the gout; yet he watches the hapless woman with the jealousy of a tiger, though he himself is openly faithless to her. What is the Queen to him, since the widow of Lysimachus returned from Thrace—no, from Cassandrea, Ephesus, and sacred Samothrace, or whatever other places there are which would no longer tolerate the murderess?"

"The King's sister—the object of his love?" cried Hermon incredulously. "She must be forty years old now."

"Very true," Althea assented. "But we are in Egypt, where marriages between brothers and sisters are pleasing to gods and men; and besides, we make our own moral laws here. Her age! We women are only as old as we look, and the leeches and tiring women of this beauty of forty practise arts which give her the appearance of twenty-five, yet perhaps the King values her intellect more than her person, and the wisdom of a hundred serpents is certainly united in this woman's head. She will make our poor Queen suffer unless real friends guard her from the worst. The three most trustworthy ones are here: Amyntas, the leech Chrysippus, and the admirable Proclus. Let us hope that you will make this three-leaved clover the luck-promising

four-leaved one. Your uncle, too, has often with praiseworthy generosity helped Arsinoë in many an embarrassment. Only make the acquaintance of this beautiful royal lady, and the last drop of your blood will not seem too precious to shed for her! Besides—Proclus told me so in confidence—you have little favour to expect from the King. How long he kept you waiting for the first word concerning a work which justly transported the whole city with delight! When he did finally summon you, he said things which must have wounded you."

"That is going too far," replied Hermon.

"Then he kept back his real opinion," Althea protested. "Had I not made it a rule to maintain absolute silence concerning everything I hear in conversation from those with whom I am closely associated——"

Here she was interrupted by Chrysippus, who asked if Althea had told her neighbour about his Rhodian eye-salve.

He winked at her and made a significant gesture as he spoke, and then informed the blind artist how graciously Arsinoë had remembered him when she heard of the remedy by whose aid many a wonderful cure of blind eyes had been made in Rhodes. The royal lady had inquired about him and his sufferings with almost

sisterly interest, and Althea eagerly confirmed the statement.

Hermon listened to the pair in silence.

He had not been able to see them, it is true, yet he had perceived their design as if the loss of sight had sharpened his mental vision. He imagined that he could see the favourite and Althea nudge each other with sneering gestures, and believed that their sole purpose was to render him—he knew not for what object—the obedient tool of the Queen, who had probably also succeeded in persuading his usually cautious uncle to render her great services.

The remembrance of Arsinoë's undignified conduct at the Dionysia, and the shameful stories of her which he had heard returned to his mind. At the same time he saw Daphne rise before him in her aristocratic dignity and kindly goodness, and a smile of satisfaction hovered around his lips as he said to himself: "The spider Althea again! But, in spite of my blindness, I will be caught neither in her net nor in the Queen's. They are the last to bar the way which leads to Daphne and real happiness."

The Rhodian was just beginning to praise Arsinoë also as a special friend and connoisseur of the sculptor's art when Crates, Hermon's fellow-student, asked the blind artist, in behalf

of his beautiful companion, why his Demeter was placed upon a pedestal which, to others as well as himself, seemed too high for the size of the statue.

Hermon replied that he had heard several make this criticism, but the priests of the goddess refused to take it into account.

Here he hesitated, for, like a blow from an invisible hand, the thought darted through his mind that perhaps, on the morrow, he would see himself compelled before the whole world to cast aside the crown of fame which he owed to the statue on the lofty pedestal. He did not have even the remotest idea of continuing to deck himself with false renown if his dread was realized; yet he doubtless imagined how this whole aristocratic circle, with the Queen, Althea, and Proclus at its head, would turn with reckless haste from the hapless man who had led them into such a shameful error.

Yet what mattered it, even if these miserable people considered themselves deceived and pointed the finger of scorn at him? Better people would thereby be robbed of the right to accuse him of faithlessness to himself. This thought darted through his heated brain like a flash of lightning, and when, in spite of his silence, the conversation was continued and Althea told the

others that only Hermon's blindness had prevented the creation of a work which could have been confidently expected far to surpass the Demeter, since it seemed to have been exactly suited to his special talent, he answered his beautiful companion's remark curtly and absently.

She perceived this with annoyance and perplexity.

A woman who yearns for the regard of all men, and makes love a toy, easily lessens the demands she imposes upon individuals. Only, even though love has wholly disappeared, she still claims consideration, and Althea did not wish to lose Hermon's regard.

When Amyntas, the head of the conspirators, attracted the attention of the company by malicious remarks about the King's sister, the Thracian laid her hand on the blind artist's arm, whispering: "Has the image of the Arachne which, at Tennis, charmed you even in the presence of the angry Zeus, completely vanished from your memory? How indifferent you look! But I tell you"—her deep blue eyes flashed as she spoke—"that so long as you were still a genuine creating artist the case was different. Even while putting the last touches of the file to the Demeter, for which Archias's devout

daughter posed as your model, another whom you could not banish from your mind filled your imagination. Though so loud a denial is written on your face, I persist in my conviction, and that no idle delusion ensnares me I can prove!"

Hermon raised his sightless eyes to her inquiringly, but she went on with eager positiveness: "Or, if you did not think of the weaver while carving the goddess, how did you happen to engrave a spider on the ribbon twined around the ears of grain in Demeter's hand? Not the smallest detail of a work produced by the hand of a valued friend escapes my notice, and I perceived it before the Demeter came to the temple and the lofty pedestal. Now I would scarcely be able to discover it in the dusky cella, yet at that time I took pleasure in the sight of the ugly insect, not only because it is cleverly done, but because it reminded me of something"—here she lowered her voice still more—"that pleased me, though probably it would seem less flattering to the daughter of Archias, who perhaps is better suited to act as guide to the blind. How bewildered you look! Eternal gods! Many things are forgotten after long months have passed, but it will be easy for me to sharpen your memory. 'At the time Hermon had just finished the

Demeter,' the spider called to me, 'he scratched me on the gold.' But at that very time—yes, my handsome friend, I can reckon accurately—you had met me, Althea, in Tennis, I had brought the spider-woman before your eyes. Was it really nothing but foolish vanity that led me to the conviction that you were thinking of me also when you engraved on the ribbon the despised spider—for which, however, I always felt a certain regard—with the delicate web beneath its slender legs?"

Hitherto Hermon had listened to every word in silence, labouring for breath. He was transported as if by magic to the hour of his return from Pelusium; he saw himself enter Myrtilus's studio and watch his friend scratch something, he did not know what, upon the ribbon which fastened the bunch of golden grain. It was—nay, it could have been nothing else—that very spider. The honoured work was not his, but his dead friend's. How the exchange had occurred he could not now understand, but to disbelieve that it had taken place would have been madness or self-deception.

Now he also understood the doubts of Soteles and the King. Not he—Myrtilus, and he alone, was the creator of the much-lauded Demeter!

This conviction raised a hundred-pound weight from his soul.

What was applause! What was recognition! What were fame and laurel wreaths! He desired clearness and truth for himself and all the world and, as if frantic, he suddenly sprang from his cushions, shouting to the startled guests: "I myself and this whole great city were deceived! The Demeter is not mine, not the work of Hermon! The dead Myrtilus created it!"

Then pressing his hand to his brow, he called his student friend to his side, and, as the scholar anxiously laid his arm on his shoulder, whispered: "Away, away from here! Only let me get out of doors into the open air!"

Crates, bewildered and prepared for the worst, obeyed his wish; but Althea and the other guests left behind felt more and more impressed by the suddenly awakened conviction that the hapless blind man had now also become the victim of madness.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITHOUT a word of explanation, Hermon dragged his guide along in breathless haste.

No one stopped them.

The atrium, usually swarming with guards, servants, and officials until a far later hour, was completely deserted when the blind man hurried through it with his friend.

The door leading into the outer air stood open, but Hermon, leaning on the scholar's arm, had scarcely crossed the threshold and entered the little courtyard encircled with ornamental plants, which separated this portion of the palace from the street, when both were surrounded by a band of armed Macedonian soldiers, whose commander exclaimed: "In the name of the King! Not a sound, if you value your lives!"

Incensed, and believing that there was some mistake, Hermon announced himself as a sculptor and Crates as a member of the Museum, but this statement did not produce the slightest effect upon the warrior; nay, when the friends an-

swered the officer's inquiry whether they were coming from Proclus's banquet in the affirmative, he curtly commanded them to be put in chains.

To offer resistance would have been madness, for even Hermon perceived, by the loud clanking of weapons around them, the greatly superior power of the enemy, and they were acting by the orders of the King. "To the prison near the place of execution!" cried the officer; and now not only the mythograph, but Hermon also was startled—this dungeon opened only to those sentenced to death.

Was he to be led to the executioner's block? A cold shudder ran through his frame; but the next moment he threw back his waving locks, and his chest heaved with a long breath.

What pleasure had life to offer him, the blind man, who was already dead to his art?

Ought he not to greet this sudden end as a boon from the immortals?

Did it not spare him a humiliation as great and painful as could be imagined?

He had already taken care that the false renown should not follow him to the grave, and Myrtilus should have his just due, and he would do whatever else lay in his power to further this object. Wherever the beloved dead might be,

he desired to go there also. Whatever might await him, he desired no better fate. If he had passed into annihilation, he, Hermon, wished to follow him thither, and annihilation certainly meant redemption from pain and misery. But if he were destined to meet his Myrtilus and his mother in the world beyond the grave, what had he not to tell them, how sure he was of finding a joyful reception there from both! The power which delivered him over to death just at that moment was not Nemesis—no, it was a kindly deity.

Only his heart grew heavy at the thought of leaving Daphne to the tireless wooer Philotas or some other—everything else from which it is usually hard to part seemed like a burden that we gladly cast aside.

"Forward!" he called blithely and boldly to the officer; while Crates, with loud lamentations, was protesting his innocence to the warrior who was putting fetters upon him.

A chain was just being clasped around Hermon's wrists also when he suddenly started. His keen ear could not deceive him, and yet a demon must be mocking him, for the voice that had called his name was the girl's of whom, in the presence of welcome death, he had thought with longing regret.

Yet it was no illusion that deceived him. Again he heard the beloved voice, and this time it addressed not only him, but with the utmost haste the commander of the soldiers.

Sometimes with touching entreaty, sometimes with imperious command, she protested, after giving him her name, that this matter could be nothing but an unfortunate mistake. Lastly, with earnest warmth, she besought him, before taking the prisoners away, to permit her to speak to the commanding general, Philippus, her father's guest, who, she was certain, was in the palace. The blood of these innocent men would be on his head if he did not listen to her representations.

"Daphne!" cried Hermon in grateful agitation; but she would not listen to him, and followed the soldier whom the captain detailed to guide her into the palace.

After a few moments, which the blind artist used to inspire the despairing scholar with courage, the girl returned, and she did not come alone. The gray-haired comrade of Alexander accompanied her, and after a few minutes both prisoners were released from their fetters. Philippus hastily refused their thanks and, after addressing a few words to the officer, he changed his tone, and his deep voice sounded paternally

cordial as he exclaimed to Daphne: "Fifteen minutes more, you dear, foolhardy girl, and it would have been too late. To-morrow you shall confess to me who treacherously directed you to this dangerous path."

Lastly, he turned to the prisoners to explain that they would be conducted to the adjacent barracks of the Diadochi, and spend the night there.

Early the next morning they should be examined, and, if they could clear themselves from the suspicion of belonging to the ranks of the conspirators, released.

Daphne again pleaded for the liberation of the prisoners, but Philippus silenced her with the grave exclamation, "The order of the King!"

The old commander offered no objection to her wish to accompany Hermon to prison.

Daphne now slipped her arm through her cousin's, and commanded the steward Gras, who had brought her here, to follow them.

The goal of the nocturnal walk, which was close at hand, was reached at the end of a few minutes, and the prisoners were delivered to the commander of the Diadochi. This kindly disposed officer had served under Hermon's father, and when the names of the prisoners were

given, and the officer reported to him that General Philippus recommended them to his care as innocent men, he had a special room opened for the sculptor and his fair guide, and ordered Crates to enter another.

He could permit the beautiful daughter of the honoured Archias to remain with Hermon for half an hour, then he must beg her to allow herself to be escorted to her home, as the barracks were closed at that time.

As soon as the captive artist was alone with the woman he loved, he clasped her hand, pouring forth incoherent words of the most ardent gratitude, and when he felt her warmly return the pressure, he could not restrain the desire to clasp her to his heart. For the first time his lips met hers, he confessed his love, and that he had just regarded death as a deliverer; but his life was now gaining new charm through her affection.

Then Daphne herself threw her arms around his neck with fervent devotion.

The love that resistlessly drew his heart to her was returned with equal strength and ardour.

In spite of his deep mental distress, he could have shouted aloud in his delight and gratitude. He might now have been permitted to bind forever to his life the woman who had just rescued

him from the greatest danger, but the confession he must make to his fellow-artists in the palæstra the following morning still sealed his lips. Yet in this hour he felt that he was united to her, and ought not to conceal what awaited him; so, obeying a strong impulse, he exclaimed: "You know that I love you! Words can not express the strength of my devotion, but for that very reason I must do what duty commands before I ask the question, 'Will you join your fate to mine?'"

"I love you and have loved you always!" Daphne exclaimed tenderly. "What more is needed?"

But Hermon, with drooping head, murmured: "To-morrow I shall no longer be what I am now. Wait until I have done what duty enjoins; when that is accomplished, you shall ask yourself what worth the blind artist still possesses who bartered spurious fame for mockery and disgrace in order not to become a hypocrite."

Then Daphne raised her face to his, asking, "So the Demeter is the work of Myrtilus?"

"Certainly," he answered firmly. "It is the work of Myrtilus."

"Oh, my poor, deceived love!" cried Daphne, strongly agitated, in a tone of the deepest

sorrow. "What a terrible ordeal again awaits you! It must indeed distress me—and yet—— Do not misunderstand me! It seems nevertheless as if I ought to rejoice, for you and your art have not spoken to me even a single moment from this much-lauded work."

"And therefore," he interrupted with passionate delight, "therefore alone you withheld the enthusiastic praise with which the others intoxicated me? And I, fool, blinded also in mind, could be vexed with you for it! But only wait, wait! Soon—to-morrow even—there will be no one in Alexandria who can accuse me of deserting my own honest aspiration, and, if the gods will only restore my sight and the ability to use my hands as a sculptor, then, girl, then——"

Here he was interrupted by a loud knocking at the door.

The time allowed had expired.

Hermon again warmly embraced Daphne, saying: "Then go! Nothing can cloud what these brief moments have bestowed. I must remain blind; but you have restored the lost sight to my poor darkened soul. To-morrow I shall stand in the palæstra before my comrades, and explain to them what a malicious accident deceived me, and with me this whole great city. Many will not believe me, and even your father

will perhaps consider it a disgrace to give his arm to his scorned, calumniated nephew to guide him home. Bring this before your mind, and everything else that you must accept with it, if you consent, when the time arrives, to become mine. Conceal and palliate nothing! But should the Lady Thyone speak of the Eumenides who pursued me, tell her that they had probably again extended their arms toward me, but when I return to-morrow from the palæstra I shall be freed from the terrible beings."

Lastly, he asked to be told quickly how she had happened to come to the palace at the right time at so late an hour, and Daphne informed him as briefly and modestly as if the hazardous venture which, in strong opposition to her retiring, womanly nature, she had undertaken, was a mere matter of course.

When Thyone in her presence heard from Gras that Hermon intended to go to Proclus's banquet, she started up in horror, exclaiming, "Then the unfortunate man is lost!"

Her husband, who had long trusted even the gravest secrets to his discreet old wife, had informed her of the terrible office the King had confided to him. All the male guests of Proclus were to be executed; the women—the Queen at their head—would be sent into exile.

Then Daphne, on her knees, besought the matron to tell her what threatened Hermon, and succeeded in persuading her to speak.

The terrified girl, accompanied by Gras, went first to her lover's house and, when she did not find him there, hastened to the King's palace.

If Hermon could have seen her with her fluttering hair, dishevelled by the night breeze, and cheeks blanched by excitement and terror, if he had been told how she struggled with Thyone, who tried to detain her and lock her up before she left her father's house, he would have perceived with still prouder joy, had that been possible, what he possessed in the devoted love of this true woman.

Grateful and moved by joyous hopes, he informed Daphne of the words of the oracle, which had imprinted themselves upon his memory.

She, too, quickly retained them, and murmured softly:

Noise and dazzling radiance are hostile to the purer light,
Morning and day will rise quietly from the starving sand.

What could the verse mean except that the blind man would regain the power to behold the light of day amid the sands of the silent desert?

Perhaps it would be well for him to leave Alexandria now, and she described how much

benefit she had received while hunting from the silence of the wilderness, when she had left the noise of the city behind her. But before she had quite finished, the knocking at the door was repeated.

The lovers took leave of each other with one last kiss, and the final words of the departing girl echoed consolingly in the blind man's heart, "The more they take from you, the more closely I will cling to you."

Hermon spent the latter portion of the night rejoicing in the consciousness of a great happiness, yet also troubled by the difficult task which he could not escape.

When the market place was filling, gray-haired Philippus visited him.

He desired before the examination, for which every preparation had been made, to understand personally the relation of his dead comrade's son to the defeated conspiracy, and he soon perceived that Hermon's presence at the banquet was due solely to an unlucky accident or in consequence of the Queen's desire to win him over to her plot.

Yet he was forced to advise the blind sculptor to leave Alexandria. The suspicion that he had been associated with the conspirators was the more difficult to refute, because his Uncle

Archias had imprudently allowed himself to be persuaded by Proclus and Arsinoë to lend the Queen large sums, which had undoubtedly been used to promote her abominable plans.

Philippus also informed him that he had just come from Archias, whom he had earnestly urged to fly as quickly as possible from the persecution which was inevitable; for, secure as Hermon's uncle felt in his innocence, the receipts for the large sums loaned by him, which had just been found in Proclus's possession, would bear witness against him. Envy and ill will would also have a share in this affair, and the usually benevolent King knew no mercy where crime against his own person was concerned. So Archias intended to leave the city on one of his own ships that very day. Daphne, of course, would accompany him.

The prisoner listened in surprise and anxiety.

His uncle driven from his secure possessions to distant lands! Daphne taken from him, he knew not whither nor for how long a time, after he had just been assured of her great love! He himself on the way to expose himself to the malice and mockery of the whole city!

His heart contracted painfully, and his solicitude about his uncle's fate increased when

Philippus informed him that the conspirators had been arrested at the banquet and, headed by Amyntas, the Rhodian, Chrysippus, and Proclus, had perished by the executioner's sword at sunrise.

The Queen, Althea, and the other ladies were already on the way to Coptos, in Upper Egypt, whither the King had exiled them.

Ptolemy had intrusted the execution of this severe punishment to Alexander's former comrade as the most trustworthy and discreet of his subjects, but rejected, with angry curtness, Philippus's attempt to uphold the innocence of his friend Archias.

The old man's conversation with Hermon was interrupted by the functionaries who subjected him and Crates to the examination. It lasted a long time, and referred to every incident in the artist's life since his return to Alexandria. The result was favourable, and the prisoner was dismissed from confinement with the learned companion of his fate.

When, accompanied by Philippus, Hermon reached his house, it was so late that the artists' festival in honour of the sculptor Euphranor, who entered his seventieth year of life that day, must have already commenced.

On the way the blind man told the general

what a severe trial awaited him, and the latter approved his course and, on bidding him farewell, with sincere emotion urged Hermon to take courage.

After hastily strengthening himself with a few mouthfuls of food and a draught of wine, his slave Patran, who understood writing, wished to put on the full laurel wreath; but Hermon was seized with a painful sense of dissatisfaction, and angrily waved it back.

Without a single green leaf on his head, he walked, leaning on the Egyptian's arm, into the palæstra, which was diagonally opposite to his house.

Doubtless he longed to hasten at once to Daphne, but he felt that he could not take leave of her until he had first cast off, as his heart and mind dictated, the terrible burden which oppressed his soul. Besides, he knew that the object of his love would not part from him without granting him one last word.

On the way his heart throbbed almost to bursting.

Even Daphne's image, and what threatened her father, and her with him, receded far into the background. He could think only of his design, and how he was to execute it.

Yet ought he not to have the laurel wreath

put on, in order, after removing it, to bestow it on the genius of Myrtilus?

Yet no!

Did he still possess the right to award this noble branch to any one? He was appearing before his companions only to give truth its just due. It was repulsive to endow this explanation of an unfortunate error with a captivating aspect by any theatrical adornment. To be honest, even for the porter, was a simple requirement of duty, and no praiseworthy merit.

The guide forced a path for him through carriages, litters, and whole throngs of slaves and common people, who had assembled before the neighbouring palæstra.

The doorkeepers admitted the blind man, who was well known here, without delay; but he called to the slave: "Quick, Patran, and not among the spectators—in the centre of the arena!"

The Egyptian obeyed, and his master crossed the wide space, strewn with sand, and approached the stage which had been erected for the festal performances.

Even had his eyes retained the power of sight, his blood was coursing so wildly through his veins that he might perhaps have been unable to distinguish the statues around him and the

thousands of spectators, who, crowded closely together, richly garlanded, their cheeks glowing with enthusiasm, surrounded the arena.

"Hermon!" shouted his friend Soteles in joyful surprise in the midst of this painful walk.

"Hermon!" resounded here, there, and everywhere as, leaning on his friend's arm, he stepped upon the stage, and the acclamations grew louder and louder as Soteles fulfilled the sculptor's request and led him to the front of the platform.

Obeying a sign from the director of the festival, the chorus, which had just sung a hymn to the Muses, was silent.

Now the sculptor began to speak, and noisy applause thundered around him as he concluded the well-chosen words of homage with which he offered cordial congratulations to the estimable Euphranor, to whom the festival was given; but the shouts soon ceased, for the audience had heard his modest entreaty to be permitted to say a few words, concerning a personal matter, to those who were his professional colleagues, as well as to the others who had honoured him with their interest and, only too loudly, with undeserved applause. The more closely what he had to say concerned himself, the briefer he would make his story.

And, in fact, he did not long claim the attention of his hearers. Clearly and curtly he stated how it had been possible to mistake Myrtilus's work for his, how the Tennis goldsmith had dispelled his first suspicion, and how vainly he had besought the priests of Demeter to be permitted to feel his statue. Then, without entering into details, he informed them that, through an accident, he had now reached the firm conviction that he had long worn wreaths which belonged to another. But, though the latter could not rise from the grave, he still owed it to truth, to whose service he had dedicated his art from the beginning, and to the simple honesty, dear alike to the peasant and the artist, to divest himself of the fame to which he was not entitled. Even while he believed himself to be the creator of the Demeter, he had been seriously troubled by the praise of so many critics, because it had exposed him to the suspicion of having become faithless to his art and his nature. In the name of the dead, he thanked his dear comrades for the enthusiastic appreciation his masterpiece had found. Honour to Myrtilus and his art, but he trusted this noble festal assemblage would pardon the unintentional deception, and aid his prayer for recovery. If it should be granted, he hoped to

show that Hermon had not been wholly unworthy to adorn himself for a short time with the wreaths of Myrtilus.

When he closed, deep silence reigned for a brief interval, and one man looked at another irresolutely until the hero of the day, gray-haired Euphranor, rose and, leaning on the arm of his favourite pupil, walked through the centre of the arena to the stage, mounted it, embraced Hermon with paternal warmth, and made him happy by the words: "The deception that has fallen to your lot, my poor young friend, is a lamentable one; but honour to every one who honestly means to uphold the truth. We will beseech the immortals with prayers and sacrifices to restore sight to your artist eyes. If I am permitted, my dear young comrade, to see you continue to create, it will be a source of joy to me and all of us; yet the Muses, even though unasked, lead into the eternal realm of beauty the elect who consecrates his art to truth with the right earnestness."

The embrace with which the venerable hero of the festival seemed to absolve Hermon was greeted with loud applause; but the kind words which Euphranor, in the weak voice of age, had addressed to the blind man had been unintelligible to the large circle of guests.

When he again descended to the arena new plaudits rose; but soon hisses and other signs of disapproval blended with them, which increased in strength and number when a well-known critic, who had written a learned treatise concerning the relation of the Demeter to Hermon's earlier works, expressed his annoyance by a loud whistle. The dissatisfied and disappointed spectators now vied with one another to silence those who were cheering by a hideous uproar, while the latter expressed more and more loudly the sincere esteem with which they were inspired by the confession of the artist who, though cruelly prevented from winning fresh fame, cast aside the wreath which a dead man had, as it were, proffered from his tomb.

Probably every man thought that, in the same situation, he would have done the same, yet not only justice—nay, compassion—dictated showing the blind artist that they believed in and would sustain him. The ill-disposed insisted that Hermon had only done what duty commanded the meanest man, and the fact that he had deceived all Alexandria still remained. Not a few joined this party, for larger possessions excite envy perhaps even more frequently than greater fame.

Soon the approving and opposing voices

mingled in an actual conflict. But before the famous sculptor Chares, the great and venerable artist Nicias, and several younger friends of Hermon quelled this unpleasant disturbance of the beautiful festival, the blind man, leaning on the arm of his fellow-artist Soteles, had left the palæstra.

At the exit he parted from his friend, who had been made happy by the ability to absolve his more distinguished leader from the reproach of having become faithless to their common purpose, and who intended to intercede further in his behalf in the palæstra.

Hermon no longer needed him; for, besides his slave Patran, he found the steward Gras, who, by his master's order, guided the blind man to Archias's closed harmamaxa, which was waiting outside the building.

CHAPTER IX.

THE sculptor's head was burning feverishly when he entered the vehicle. He had never imagined that the consequences of his explanation would be so terrible. During the drive—by no means a long one—to the great harbour, he strove to collect his thoughts. Groaning aloud, he covered his ears with his hands to shut out the shouts and hisses from the palæstra, which in reality were no longer audible.

True, he would not need to expose himself to this uproar a second time, yet if he remained in Alexandria the witticisms, mockery, and jibes of the whole city, though in a gentler form, would echo hundreds of times around him.

He must leave the city. He would have preferred to go on board the staunch Tacheia and be borne far away with his uncle and Daphne, but he was obliged to deny himself the fulfilment of this desire. He must now think solely of regaining his sight.

Obedient to the oracle, he would go to the

desert where from the "starving sand" the radiant daylight was to rise anew for him.

There he would, at any rate, be permitted to recover the clearness of perception and feeling which he had lost in the delirium of the dissolute life of pleasure that he had led in the past. Pythagoras had already forbidden the folly of spoiling the present by remorse, and he, too, did not do this. It would have been repugnant to his genuinely Greek nature. Instead of looking backward with peevish regret, his purpose was to look with blithe confidence toward the future, and to do his best to render it better and more fruitful than the months of revel which lay behind him.

He could no longer imagine a life worth living without Daphne, and the thought that if his uncle were robbed of his wealth he would become her support cheered his heart. If the oracle did not fulfil its promise, he would again appeal to medical skill, and submit even to the most severe suffering which might be imposed upon him.

The drive to the great harbour was soon over, but the boat which lay waiting for him had a considerable distance to traverse, for the Tacheia was no longer at the landing place, but was tacking outside the Pharos, in order, if the

warrant of arrest were issued, not to be stopped at the channel dominated by the lighthouse.

He found the slender trireme pervaded by a restless stir. His uncle had long been expecting him with burning impatience.

He knew, through Philippus, what duty still detained the deceived artist, but he learned, at the same time, that his own imprisonment had been determined, and it would be advisable for him to leave the city behind him as quickly as possible. Yet neither Daphne nor he was willing to depart without saying farewell to Hermon.

But the danger was increasing every moment, and, warm as was the parting, the last clasp of the hand and kiss swiftly followed the first words of greeting.

So the blind artist learned only that Archias was going to the island of Lesbos, his mother's home, and that he had promised his daughter to give Hermon time to recover his sight. The property bequeathed to him by Myrtilus had been placed by the merchant in the royal bank, and he had also protected himself against any chance of poverty. Hermon was to send news of his health to Lesbos from time to time if a safe opportunity offered and, when Daphne knew where he was to be found, she could let him

have tidings. Of course, for the present great caution must be exercised in order not to betray the abode of the fugitives.

Hermon, too, ought to evade the pursuit of the incensed King as quickly as possible.

Not only Daphne's eyes, but her father's also, overflowed with tears at this parting, and Hermon perceived more plainly than ever that he was as dear to his uncle as though he were his own son.

The low words which the artist exchanged with the woman whose love, even during the period of separation, would shed light and warmth upon his darkened life, were deeply impressed upon the souls of both.

For the present, faithful Gras was to remain in charge of his master's house in Alexandria.

Leaning on his arm, the blind man left the Tacheia, which, as soon as both had entered the boat, was urged forward by powerful strokes of the oars.

The Bithynian informed Hermon that kerchiefs were waving him a farewell from the trireme, that the sails had been unfurled, and the wind was driving the swift vessel before it like a swallow.

At the Pharos Gras reported that a royal galley was just passing them, undoubtedly in

pursuit of the Tacheia; but the latter was the swiftest of all the Greek vessels, and they need not fear that she would be overtaken by the war ship.

With a sore heart and the desolate feeling of being now utterly alone, Hermon again landed and ordered that his uncle's harmamaxa should convey him to the necropolis. He desired to seek peace at his mother's grave, and to take leave of these beloved tombs.

Guided by the steward, he left them cheered and with fresh confidence in the future, and the faithful servant's account of the energy with which Daphne had aided the preparations for departure benefited him like a refreshing bath.

When he was again at home, one visitor after another was announced, who came there from the festival in the palæstra, and, in spite of his great reluctance to receive them, he denied no one admittance, but listened even to the ill-disposed and spiteful.

In the battle which he had commenced he must not shrink from wounds, and he was struck by many a poisoned shaft. But, to make amends, a clear understanding was effected between him and those whom he esteemed.

The last caller left him just before midnight.

Hermon now made many preparations for departure.

He intended to go into the desert with very little luggage, as the oracle seemed to direct. How long a time his absence would extend could not be estimated, and the many poor people whom he had fed and supported must not suffer through his departure. The arrangements required to effect this he dictated to the slave, who understood writing. He had gained in him an extremely capable servant, and Patran expressed his readiness to follow him into the desert; but the wry face which, sure that the blind man could not see him, he made while saying so, seemed to prove the contrary.

Weary, and yet too excited to find sleep, Hermon at last went to rest.

If his Myrtilus had been with him now, what would he not have had to say to express his gratitude, to explain! How overjoyed he would have been at the fulfilment of his wish to see him united to Daphne, at least in heart; with what fiery ardour he would have upbraided those who believed him capable of having appropriated what belonged to another!

But Myrtilus was no more, and who could tell whether his body had not remained unburied, and his soul was therefore condemned to

be borne restlessly between heaven and earth, like a leaf driven by the wind? Yet, if the earth covered him, where was the spot on which sacrifices could be offered to his soul, his tombstone could be anointed, and he himself remembered?

Then a doubt which had never before entered his mind suddenly took possession of Hermon.

Since for so many months he had firmly believed his friend's work to be his own, he might also have fallen into another delusion, and Myrtilus might still dwell among the living.

At this thought the blind man, with a swift movement, sat erect upon his couch; it seemed as if a bright light blazed before his eyes in the dark room.

The reasons which had led the authorities to pronounce Myrtilus dead rendered his early end probable, it is true, yet by no means proved it absolutely. He must hold fast to that.

He who, ever since he returned to Alexandria from Tennis, had squandered precious time as if possessed by evil demons, would now make a better use of it. Besides, he longed to leave the capital. What! Suppose he should now, even though it were necessary to delay obeying the oracle's command, search, traverse, sail

through the world in pursuit of Myrtilus, even, if it must be, to the uttermost Thule?

But he fell back upon the couch as quickly as he had started up.

"Blind! blind!" he groaned in dull despair. How could he, who was not able even to see his hand before his eyes, succeed in finding his friend?

And yet, yet——

Had his mind been darkened with his eyes, that this thought came to him now for the first time, that he had not sent messengers to all quarters of the globe to find some trace of the assailants and, with them, of the lost man?

Perhaps it was Ledscha who had him in her power, and, while he was pondering and forming plans for the best way of conducting investigations, the dimmed image of the Biamite again returned distinctly to his mind, and with it that of Arachne and the spider, into which the goddess transformed the weaver.

Half overcome by sleep, he saw himself, staff in hand, led by Daphne, cross green meadows and deserts, valleys and mountains, to seek his friend; yet whenever he fancied he caught sight of him, and Ledscha with him, in the distance, the spider descended from above and, with magi-

cal speed, wove a net which concealed both from his gaze.

Groaning and deeply disturbed, half awake, he struggled onward, always toward one goal, to find his Myrtilus again, when suddenly the sound of the knocker on the entrance door and the barking of Lycas, his Arabian greyhound, shook the house.

Recalled to waking life, he started up and listened.

Had the men who were to arrest him or inquisitive visitors not allowed themselves to be deterred even by the late hour?

He listened angrily as the old porter sternly accosted the late guest; but, directly after, the gray-haired native of the region near the First Cataract burst into the strange Nubian oaths which he lavished liberally whenever anything stirred his aged soul.

The dog, which Hermon had owned only a few months, continued to bark; but above his hostile baying the blind man thought he recognised a name at whose sound the blood surged hotly into his cheeks. Yet he could scarcely have heard aright!

Still he sprang from the couch, groped his way to the door, opened it, and entered the impluvium that adjoined his bedroom. The cool

night air blew upon him from the open ceiling. A strong draught showed that the door leading from the atrium was being opened, and now a shout, half choked by weeping, greeted him: "Hermon! My dear, my poor beloved master!"

"Bias, faithful Bias!" fell from the blind man's lips, and when he felt the returned slave sink down before him, cover his hand with kisses and wet it with tears, he raised him in his strong arms, clasped him in a warm embrace, kissed his cheeks, and gasped, "And Myrtilus, my Myrtilus, is he alive?"

"Yes, yes, yes," sobbed Bias. "But you, my lord—blind, blind! Can it be true?"

When Hermon released him to inquire again about his friend, Bias stammered: "He isn't faring so badly; but you, you, bereft of light and also of the joy of seeing your faithful Bias again! And the immortals prolong one's years to experience such evils! Two griefs always belong to one joy, like two horses to a chariot."

"My wise Bias! Just as you were of old!" cried Hermon in joyful excitement.

Then he quieted the hound and ordered one of the attendants, who came hurrying in, to bring out whatever dainty viands the house contained and a jar of the best Byblus wine from the cellar.

Meanwhile he did not cease his inquiries about his friend's health, and ordered a goblet to be brought him also, that he might pledge the slave and give brief answers to his sympathizing questions about the cause of the blindness, the noble Archias, the gracious young mistress Daphne, the famous Philippus and his wife, the companion Chrysilla, and the steward Gras. Amid all this he resolved to free the faithful fellow and, while Bias was eating, he could not refrain from telling him that he had found a mistress for him, that Daphne was the wife whom he had chosen, but the wedding was still a long way off.

He controlled his impatience to learn the particulars concerning his friend's fate until Bias had partially satisfied his hunger.

A short time ago Hermon would have declared it impossible that he could ever become so happy during this period of conflict and separation from the object of his love.

The thought of his lost inheritance doubtless flitted through his mind, but it seemed merely like worthless dust, and the certainty that Myrtilus still walked among the living filled him with unclouded happiness. Even though he could no longer see him, he might expect to hear his beloved voice again. Oh, what delight

that he was permitted to have his friend once more, as well as Daphne, that he could meet him so freely and joyously and keep the laurel, which had rested with such leaden weight upon his head, for Myrtilus, and for him alone!

But where was he?

What was the name of the miracle which had saved him, and yet kept him away from his embrace so long?

How had Myrtilus and Bias escaped the flames and death on that night of horror?

A flood of questions assailed the slave before he could begin a connected account, and Hermon constantly interrupted it to ask for details concerning his friend and his health at each period and on every occasion.

Much surprised by his discreet manner, the artist listened to the bondman's narrative; for though Bias had formerly allowed himself to indulge in various little familiarities toward his master, he refrained from them entirely in this story, and the blind man's misfortune invested him in his eyes with a peculiar sacredness.

CHAPTER X.

He had arrived wounded on the pirate ship with his master's friend, the returned bondman began. When he had regained consciousness, he met Ledscha on board the Hydra, as the wife of the pirate Hanno. She had nursed Myrtilus with tireless solicitude, and also often cared for his, Bias's, wounds. After the recovery of the prisoners, she became their protectress, and placed Bias in the service of the Greek artist.

They, the Gaul Lutarius, and one of the sculptor's slaves, were the only ones who had been brought on board the Hydra alive from the attack in Tennis, but the latter soon succumbed to his wounds.

Hermon owed it solely to the bridge-builder that he had escaped from the vengeance of his Biamite foe, for the tall Gaul, whose thick beard resembled Hermon's in length and blackness, was mistaken by Hanno for the person whom Ledscha had directed him to deliver alive into her power.

The pirate had surrendered the wrong captive to the woman he loved and, as Bias declared, to his serious disadvantage; for, though Hanno and the Biamite girl were husband and wife, no one could help perceiving the cold dislike with which Ledscha rebuffed the giant who read her every wish in her eyes. Finally, the captain of the pirate ship, a silent man by nature, often did not open his lips for days except to give orders to the crew. Frequently he even refused to be relieved from duty, and remained all night at the helm.

Only when, at his own risk, or with the vessels of his father and brother, he attacked merchant ships or defended himself against a war galley, did he wake to vigorous life and rush with gallant recklessness into battle.

A single man on the Hydra was little inferior to him in strength and daring—the Gaul Lutarius. He had been enrolled among the pirates, and when Hanno was wounded in an engagement with a Syrian war galley, was elected his representative. During this time Ledscha faithfully performed her duty as her young husband's nurse, but afterward treated him as coldly as before.

Yet she devoted herself eagerly to the ship and the crew, and the fierce, lawless fellows

cheerfully submitted to the sensible arrangements of their captain's beautiful, energetic wife.

At this period Bias had often met Ledscha engaged in secret conversation with the Gaul, yet if any tender emotion really attracted her toward any one other than her husband, Myrtilus would have been suspected rather than the black-bearded bridge-builder; for she not only showed the sculptor the kindest consideration, but often entered into conversation with him, and even persuaded him, when the sea was calm, or the Hydra lay at anchor in one of the hidden bays known to the pirates, to practise his art, and at last to make a bust of her. She had succeeded in getting him clay, wax, and tools for the purpose. After asking which goddess had ill-treated the weaver Arachne, she commanded him to make a head of Athene, adorned with the helmet, modelled from her own. During this time she frequently inquired whether her features really were not beautiful enough to be copied for the countenance of a goddess, and when he eagerly assured her of the fact, made him swear that he was not deceiving her with flattery.

Neither Bias nor Myrtilus had ever been allowed to remain on shore; but, on the whole, the slave protested, Myrtilus's health, thanks to

the pure sea air on the Hydra, had improved, in spite of the longing which often assailed him, and the great excitements to which he was sometimes exposed.

There had been anxious hours when Hanno's father and brothers visited the Hydra to induce her captain to make money out of the captive sculptor, and either sell him at a high price or extort a large ransom from him; but Bias had overheard how resolutely Ledscha opposed these proposals, and represented to old Satabus of what priceless importance Myrtilus might become to them if either should be captured and imprisoned.

The greatest excitements, of course, had been connected with the battles of the pirates. Myrtilus, who, in spite of his feeble health, by no means lacked courage, found it especially hard to bear that during the conflicts he was locked up with Bias, but even Ledscha could neither prevent nor restrict these measures.

Bias could not tell what seas the Hydra had sailed, nor at what—usually desolate—shores she had touched. He only knew that she had gone to Sinope in Pontus, passed through the Propontis, and then sought booty near the coasts of Asia Minor. Ledscha had refused to answer every question that referred to these things.

Latterly, the young wife had become very grave, and apparently completely severed her relations with her husband; but she also studiously avoided the Gaul and, if they talked to each other at all, it was in hurried whispers.

So events went on until something occurred which was to affect the lives of the prisoners deeply. It must have been just beyond the outlet from the Hellespont into the Ægean Sea; for, in order to pass through the narrow straits leading thither from Pontus, the Hydra had been most skilfully given the appearance of a peaceful merchant vessel.

The slave's soul must have been greatly agitated by this experience, for while, hitherto, whenever he was interrupted by Hermon he had retained his composure, and could not refrain from occasionally connecting a practical application with his report, now, mastered by the power of the remembrance, he uttered what he wished to tell his master in an oppressed tone, while bright drops of perspiration bedewed the speaker's brow.

A large merchant ship had approached them, and three men came on board the Hydra—old Satabus, his son Labaja, and a gray-haired, bearded seafarer of tall stature and dignified bearing, Schalit, Ledscha's father.

The meeting between the Biamite ship-owner and his child, after so long a separation, was a singular one; for the young wife held out her hand to her father timidly, with downcast eyes, and he refused to take it. Directly after, however, as if constrained by an irresistible impulse, he drew his unruly daughter toward him and kissed her brow and cheeks.

Roast meat and the best wine had been served in the large ship's cabin; but though Myrtilus and Bias had been locked up as if a bloody battle was expected, the loud, angry uproar of men's deep voices reached them, and Ledscha's shrill tones shrieking in passionate wrath blended in the strife. Furniture must have been upset and dishes broken, yet the giants who were disputing here did not come to blows.

At last the savage turmoil subsided.

When Bias and his master were again released, Ledscha was standing, in the dusk of evening, at the foot of the mainmast, pressing her brow against the wood as if she needed some support to save herself from falling.

She checked Myrtilus's words with an imperious "Let me alone!" The next day she had paced restlessly up and down the deck like a caged beast of prey, and would permit no one to speak to her.

At noon Hanno was about to get into a boat to go to her father's ship, and she insisted upon accompanying him. But this time the corsair seemed completely transformed, and with the pitiless sternness, which he so well knew how to use in issuing commands, ordered her to remain on the Hydra.

She, however, by no means obeyed her husband's mandate without resistance, and, at the recollection of the conflict which now occurred between the pair, in which she raged like a tigress, the narrator's cheeks crimsoned.

The quarrel was ended by the powerful seaman's taking in his arms his lithe, slender wife, who resisted him with all her strength and had already touched the side of the boat with her foot, and putting her down on the deck of his ship.

Then Hanno leaped back into the skiff, while Ledscha, groaning with rage, retired to the cabin.

An hour after she again appeared on deck, called Myrtilus and Bias and, showing them her eyes, reddened by tears, told them, as if in apology for her weakness, that she had not been permitted to bid her father farewell. Then, pallid as a corpse, she had turned the conversation upon Hermon, and informed Myrtilus that an

Alexandrian pilot had told her father that he was blind, and her brother-in-law Labaja had heard the same thing. While saying this, her lips curled scornfully, but when she saw how deeply their friend's misfortune moved her two prisoners, she waved her hand, declaring that he did not need their sympathy; the pilot had reported that he was living in magnificence and pleasure, and the people in the capital honoured and praised him as if he were a god.

Thereupon she had laughed shrilly and reviled so bitterly the contemptible blind Fortune that remains most loyal to those who deserve to perish in the deepest misery, that Bias avoided repeating her words to his master.

The news of Myrtilus's legacy had not reached her ears, and Bias, too, had just heard of it for the first time.

Ledscha's object had been to relieve her troubled soul by attacks upon the man whom she hated, but she suddenly turned to the master and servant to ask if they desired to obtain their liberty.

Oh, how quickly a hopeful "Yes" reached the ears of the gloomy woman! how ready both were to swear, by a solemn oath, to fulfil the conditions the Biamite desired to impose!

As soon as opportunity offered, both were

to leave the Hydra with one other person who, like Bias and herself, understood how to manage a boat.

The favourable moment soon came. One moonless night, when the steering of the Hydra was intrusted to the Gaul, Ledscha waked the two prisoners and, with the Gaul Lutarius, Myrtilus, and the slave, entered the boat, which conveyed them to the shore without accident or interruption.

Bias knew the name of the place where it had anchored, it is true, but the oath which Ledscha had made him swear there was so terrible that he would not have broken it at any cost.

This oath required the slave, who, three days after their landing, was sent to Alexandria by the first ship that sailed for that port, to maintain the most absolute secrecy concerning Myrtilus's hiding place until he was authorized to speak. Bias was to go to Alexandria without delay, and there obtain from Archias, who managed Myrtilus's property, the sums which Ledscha intended to use in the following manner: Two Attic talents * Bias was to bring back. These were for the Gaul, probably in payment for his

* An Attic talent was about 4,700 marks.

assistance. Two more were to be taken by the slave to the Temple of Nemesis. Lastly, Bias was to deliver five talents to old Tabus, who kept the treasure of the pirate family on the Owl's Nest, and tell her that Ledscha, in this money, sent back the bridal dowry which Hanno had paid her father for his daughter. With this she released herself from the husband who inspired her with feelings very unlike love.

Hermon asked to have this commission repeated, and received the directions Myrtilus had given to the slave. The blind man's hope that they must also include greetings and news from his friend's hand was destroyed by Bias, whom Myrtilus, in the leisure hours on the Hydra, had taught to read. This was not so difficult a task for the slave, who longed for knowledge, and had already tried it before. But with writing, on the other hand, he could make no headway. He was too old, and his hand had become too clumsy to acquire this difficult art.

In reply to Hermon's anxious question whether his friend needed anything in his present abode, the slave reported that he was at liberty to move about at will, and was not even obliged to share Ledscha's lodgings. He lacked nothing, for the Biamite, besides some gold, had left with him also gems and pearls of such

great value that they would suffice to support him several years. As for himself, she had supplied him more than abundantly with money for travelling expenses.

Myrtilus was awaiting his return in a city prospering under a rich and wise regent, and sent whole cargoes of affectionate remembrances. The sculptor, too, was firmly resolved to keep the oath imposed upon him.

As soon as he, Bias, had performed the commission intrusted to him, he and Myrtilus would be released from their vow, and Hermon would learn his friend's residence.

CHAPTER XI.

No morning brightened Hermon's night of darkness.

When the returned slave had finished his report, the sun was already shining into his master's room.

Without lying down again, the latter went at once to the Tennis notary, who had moved to Alexandria two months before, and with his assistance raised the money which his friend needed.

Worthy Melampus had received the news that Myrtilus was still alive in a very singular manner. Even now he could grasp only one thing at a time, and he loved Hermon with sincere devotion. Therefore the lawyer who had so zealously striven to expedite the blind man's entering into possession of his friend's inheritance would very willingly have permitted Myrtilus—doubtless an invalid—to continue to rest quietly among the dead. Yet his kind heart rejoiced at the deliverance of the famous young

artist, and so during Hermon's story he had passed from sincere regret to loud expressions of joyous sympathy.

Lastly, he had placed his whole property at the disposal of Hermon, who had paid him liberally for his work, to provide for the blind sculptor's future. This generous offer had been declined; but he now assisted Hermon to prepare the emancipation papers for his faithful Bias, and found a ship that was bound to Tanis. Toward evening he accompanied Hermon to the harbour and, after a cordial farewell from his helpful friend, the artist, with the new "freedman" Bias and the slave clerk Patran, went on board the vessel, now ready to sail.

The voyage was one of the speediest, yet the end came too soon for both master and servant—Hermon had not yet heard enough of the friend beyond his reach, and Bias was far from having related everything he desired to tell about Myrtilus and Ledscha; yet he was now permitted to express every opinion that entered his mind, and this had occupied a great deal of time.

Bias also sought to know much more about Hermon's past and future than he had yet learned, not merely from curiosity, but because he foresaw that Myrtilus would not cease to question him about his blind friend.

The misfortune must have produced a deep and lasting effect upon the artist's joyous nature, for his whole bearing was pervaded by such earnestness and dignity that years, instead of months, seemed to have elapsed since their separation.

It was characteristic of Daphne that her lover's blindness did not alienate her from him; yet why had not the girl, who still desired to become his wife, been able to wed the helpless man who had lost his sight? If the father did not wish to be separated from his daughter, surely he could live with the young couple. A home was quickly made everywhere for the rich, and, if Archias was tired of his house in Alexandria, as Hermon had intimated, there was room enough in the world for a new one.

But that was the way with things here below! Man was the cause of man's misfortune! Daphne and Hermon remained the same; but Archias from an affectionate father had become transformed into an entirely different person. If the former had been allowed to follow their inclinations, they would now be united and happy, while, because a third person so willed, they must go their way solitary and wretched.

He expressed this view to his master, and insisted upon his opinion until Hermon con-

fided to him what had driven Archias from Alexandria.

Patran, Bias's successor, was by no means satisfactory to him. Had Hermon retained his sight, he certainly would not have purchased him, in spite of his skill as a scribe, for the Egyptian had a "bad face."

Oh, if only he could have been permitted to stay with his benefactor instead of this sullen man! How carefully he would have removed the stones from his darkened pathway!

During the voyage he was obliged to undergo severe struggles to keep the oath of secrecy imposed upon him; but perjury threatened him with the most horrible tortures, not to mention the sorceress Tabus, whom he was to meet.

So Myrtilus's abode remained unknown to Hermon.

Bias approved his master's intention of going into the desert. He had often seen the oracle of Amon tested, and he himself had experienced the healthfulness of the desert air. Besides, it made him proud to see that Hermon was disposed to follow his suggestion of pitching his tent in a spot which he designated. This was at the end of the arm of the sea at Clysma. Several trees grew there beside small springs, and a peaceful family of Amalekites raised vege-

tables in their little garden, situated on higher ground, watered by the desert wells.

When a boy, before the doom of slavery had been pronounced upon him and his father, his mother, by the priest's advice, took him there to recover from the severe attack of fever which he could not shake off amid the damp papyrus plantations surrounding his parents' house. In the dry, pure air of the desert he recovered, and he would guide Hermon there before returning to Myrtilus.

From Tanis they reached Tennis in a few hours, and found shelter in the home of the superintendent of Archias's weaving establishments, whose hospitality Myrtilus and Hermon had enjoyed before their installation in the white house, now burned to the ground. The Alexandrian bills of exchange were paid in gold by the lessee of the royal bank, who was a good friend of Hermon. Toward evening, both rowed to the Owl's Nest, taking the five talents with which the runaway wife intended to purchase freedom from her husband.

As the men approached the central door of the pirates' house, a middle-aged Biamite woman appeared and rudely ordered them to leave the island. Tabus was weak, and refused to see visitors. But she was mistaken; for when Bias,

in the dialect of his tribe, shouted loudly that messengers from the wife of her grandson Hanno had arrived, there was a movement at the back of the room, and broken sentences, gasped with difficulty, expressed the old dame's wish to receive the strangers.

On a sheep's-wool couch, over which was spread a wolfskin, the last gift of her son Satabus, lay the sorceress, who raised herself as Hermon passed through the door.

After his greeting, she pointed to her deaf ear and begged him to speak louder. At the same time she gazed into his eyes with a keen, penetrating glance, and interrupted him by the question: "The Greek sculptor whose studio was burned over his head? And blind? Blind still?"

"In both eyes," Bias answered for his master.

"And you, fellow?" the old dame asked; then, recollecting herself, stopped the reply on the servant's lips with the hasty remark: "You are the blackbeard's slave—a Biamite? Oh, I remember perfectly! You disappeared with the burning house."

Then she gazed intently and thoughtfully from one to the other, and at last, pointing to Bias, muttered in a whisper: "You alone come

from Hanno and Ledscha, and were with them on the Hydra? Very well. What news have you for the old woman from the young couple?"

The freedman began to relate what brought him to the Owl's Nest, and the gray-haired crone listened eagerly until he said that Ledscha lived unhappily with her husband, and therefore had left him. She sent back to her, as the head of Hanno's family, the bridal dowry with which Hanno had bought her from her father as his wife.

Then Tabus struggled into a little more erect posture, and asked: "What does this mean? Five talents—and gold, not silver talents? And she sends the money to me? To me? And she ran away from her husband? But no—no! Once more—you are a Biamite—repeat it in our own language—and loudly. This ear is the better one."

Bias obeyed, and the old dame listened to the end without interrupting him; then raising her brown right hand, covered with a network of blue-black veins, she clinched it into a fist, which she shook far more violently than Bias would have believed possible in her weak condition. At the same time she pressed her lips so tightly together that her toothless mouth deepened into a hole, and her dim eyes shone

with a keen, menacing light. For some time she found no reply, though strange, rattling, gasping sounds escaped her heaving breast.

At last she succeeded in uttering words, and shrieked shrilly: "This—this—away with the golden trash! With the bridal dowry of the family rejected, and once more free, the base fool thinks she would be like the captive fox that gnawed the rope! Oh, this age, these people! And this, this is the haughty, strong Ledscha, the daughter of the Biamites, who—there stands the blind girl-deceiver!—who so admirably avenged herself?"

Here her voice failed, and Hermon began to speak to assure her that she understood Ledscha's wish aright. Then he asked her for a token by which she acknowledged the receipt of the gold, which he handed her in a stout linen bag.

But his purpose was not fulfilled, for suddenly, flaming with passionate wrath, she thrust the purse aside, groaning: "Not an obol of the accursed destruction of souls shall come back to Hanno, nor even into the family store. Until his heart and hers stop beating, the most indissoluble bond will unite both. She desires to ransom herself from a lawful marriage concluded by her father, as if she were a captive of

war; perhaps she even wants to follow another. Hanno, brave lad, was ready to go to death for her sake, and she rewards him by bringing shame on his head and disgrace on us all. Oh, these times, this world! Everything that is inviolable and holy trampled in the dust! But they are not all so! In spite of Grecian infidelity, marriage is still honoured among our people. But she who mocks what is sacred, and tramples holy customs under foot, shall be accursed, execrated, given over to want, hunger, disease, death!"

With rattling breath and closed eyes she leaned farther back against the cushions that supported her; but Bias, in their common language, tried to soothe her, and informed her that, though Ledscha had probably run away from her husband, she had by no means renounced her vengeance. He was bringing two talents with him to place in the Temple of Nemesis.

"Of Nemesis?" repeated the old dame. Then she tried to raise herself and, as she constantly sank back again, Bias aided her. But she had scarcely recovered her sitting posture when she gasped to the freedman: "Nemesis, who helped, and is to continue to help her to destroy her foe? Well, well! Five talents—a

great sum, a great sum! But the more the better! To Nemesis with them, to Ate and the Erinyes! The talons of the avenging goddess shall tear the beautiful face, the heart, and the liver of the accursed one! A twofold malediction on her who has wronged the son of my Satabus!"

While speaking, her head nodded swiftly up and down, and when at last she bowed it wearily, her visitors heard her murmur the names of Satabus and Hanno, sometimes tenderly, sometimes mournfully.

Finally she asked whether any one else was concerned in Ledscha's flight; and when she learned that a Gallic bridge-builder accompanied the fugitive wife, she again started up as if frantic, exclaiming: "Yes, to Nemesis with the gold! We neither need nor want it, and Satabus, my son, he will bless me for renunciation——"

Here exhaustion again silenced her. She gazed mutely and thoughtfully into vacancy, until at last, turning to Bias, she began more calmly: "You will see her again, man, and must tell her what the clan of Tabus bought with her talents. Take her my curse, and let her know that her friends would be my foes, and her foes should find in Tabus a benefactress!"

Then, deeply buried in thought, she again fixed her eyes on the floor; but at last she called to Hermon, saying: "You, blind Greek —am I not right?—the torch was thrust into your face, and you lost the sight of both eyes?"

The artist assented to this question; but she bade him sit down before her, and when he bent his face near her she raised one lid after the other with trembling fingers, yet lightly and skilfully, gazed long and intently into his eyes, and murmured: "Like black Psoti and lawless Simeon, and they are both cured."

"Can you restore me?" Hermon now asked in great excitement. "Answer me honestly, you experienced woman! Give me back my sight, and demand whatever gold and valuables I still possess——"

"Keep them," Tabus contemptuously interrupted. "Not for gold or goods will I restore you the best gift man can lose. I will cure you because you are the person to whom the infamous wretch most ardently wished the sorest trouble. When she hoped to destroy you, she perceived in this deed the happiness which had been promised to her on a night when the full moon was shining. To-day—this very night—the disk between Astarte's horns rounds again,

and presently—wait a little while!—presently you shall have what the light restores you——"

Then she called the Biamite woman, ordered her to bring the medicine chest, and took from it one vessel after another. The box she was seeking was among the last and, while handing it to Bias, she muttered: "Oh, yes, certainly—it does one good to destroy a foe, but no less to make *her* foe happy!"

Turning to the freedman, she went on in a louder tone: "You, slave, shall inform Hanno's wife that old Tabus gave the sculptor, whose blindness she caused, the remedy which restored the sight of black Psoti, whom she knew."

Here she paused, gazed upward, and murmured almost unintelligibly: "Satabus, Hanno! If this is the last act of the old mother, it will give ye pleasure."

Then she told Hermon to kneel again, and ordered the slave to hold the lamp which her nurse Tasia had just lighted at the hearth fire.

"The last," she said, looking into the box, "but it will be enough. The odour of the herb in the salve is as strong as if it had been prepared yesterday."

She laid the first bandage on Hermon's eyes with her own weak fingers, at the same time muttering an incantation; but it did not seem

to satisfy her. Great excitement had taken possession of her, and as the silver light of the full moon shone into her room she waved her hands before the artist's eyes and fixed her gaze upon the threshold illumined by the moonbeams, ejaculating sentences incomprehensible to the blind man. Bias supported her, for she had risen to her full height, and he felt how she tottered and trembled.

Yet her strength held out to whisper to Hermon: "Nearer, still nearer! By the light of the august one whose rays greet us, let it be said: You will see again. Await your recovery patiently in a quiet place in the pure air, not in the city. Refrain from everything with which the Greeks intoxicate themselves. Shun wine, and whatever heats the blood. Recovery is coming; I see it drawing near. You will see again as surely as I now curse the woman who abandoned the husband to whom she vowed fidelity. She rejoiced over your blindness, and she will gnash her teeth with rage and grief when she hears that it was Tabus who brought light into the darkness that surrounds you."

With these words she pushed off the freedman's supporting arms and sank back upon the couch.

Again Hermon tried to thank her; but she

would not permit it, and said in an almost inaudible tone: "I really did not give the salve to do you good—the last act of all——"

Finally she murmured a few words of direction for its use, and added that he must keep the sunlight from his blind eyes by bandages and shades, as if it were a cruel foe.

When she paused, and Bias asked her another question, she pointed to the door, exclaiming as loudly as her weakness permitted, "Go, I tell you, go!"

Hermon obeyed and left her, accompanied by the freedman, who carried the box of salve so full of precious promise.

The next morning Bias delivered to the astonished priest of Nemesis the large gifts intended for the avenging goddess.

Before Hermon entered the boat with him and his Egyptian slave, the freedman told his master that Gula was again living in perfect harmony with the husband who had cast her off, and Taus, Ledscha's younger sister, was the wife of the young Biamite who, she had feared, would give up his wooing on account of her visit to Hermon's studio.

After a long voyage through the canal which had been dug a short time before, connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, the three

men reached Clysma. Opposite to it, on the eastern shore of the narrow northern point of the Erythræan sea * lay the goal of their journey, and thither Bias led his blind master, followed by the slave, on shore.

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* Red Sea.

CHAPTER XII.

It was long since Hermon had felt so free and light-hearted as during this voyage.

He firmly believed in his recovery.

A few days before he had escaped death in the royal palace as if by a miracle, and he owed his deliverance to the woman he loved.

In the Temple of Nemesis at Tennis the conviction that the goddess had ceased to persecute him took possession of his mind.

True, his blind eyes had been unable to see her menacing statue, but not even the slightest thrill of horror had seized him in its presence. In Alexandria, after his departure from Proclus's banquet, she had desisted from pursuing him. Else how would she have permitted him to escape uninjured when he was already standing upon the verge of an abyss, and a wave of her hand would have sufficed to hurl him into the death-dealing gulf?

But his swift confession, and the transformation which followed it, had reconciled him not

only with her, but also with the other gods; for they appeared to him in forms as radiant and friendly as in the days of his boyhood, when, while Bias took the helm on the long voyage through the canal and the Bitter Lakes, he recalled the visible world to his memory and, from the rising sun, Phœbus Apollo, the lord of light and purity, gazed at him from his golden chariot, drawn by four horses, and Aphrodite, the embodiment of all beauty, rose before him from the snowy foam of the azure waves. Demeter, in the form of Daphne, appeared, dispensing prosperity, above the swaying golden waves of the ripening grain fields and bestowing peace beside the domestic hearth. The whole world once more seemed peopled with deities, and he felt their rule in his own breast.

The place of which Bias had told him was situated on a lofty portion of the shore. Beside the springs which there gushed from the soil of the desert grew green palm trees and thorny acacias. Farther on flourished the fragrant betharàn. About a thousand paces from this spot the faithful freedman pitched the little tent obtained in Tennis under the shade of several tall palm trees and a sejâl acacia.

Not far from the springs lived the same family of Amalekites whom Bias had known from

boyhood. They raised a few vegetables in little beds, and the men acted as guards to the caravans which came from Egypt through the peninsula of Sinai to Petrea and Hebron. The daughter of the aged sheik whose men accompanied the trains of goods, a pleasant, middle-aged woman, recognised the Biamite, who when a boy had recovered under her mother's nursing, and promised Bias to honour his blind master as a valued guest of the tribe.

Not until after he had done everything in his power to render life in the wilderness endurable, and had placed a fresh bandage over his eyes, would Bias leave his master.

The freedman entered the boat weeping, and Hermon, deeply agitated, turned his face toward him.

When he was left alone with his Egyptian slave, with whom he rarely exchanged a word, he fancied that, amid the murmur of the waves washing the strand at his feet, blended the sounds of the street which led past his house in Alexandria, and with them all sorts of disagreeable memories crowded upon him; but soon he no longer heard them, and the next night brought refreshing sleep.

Even on the second day he felt that the profound silence which surrounded him was a bene-

fit. The stillness affected him like something physical.

The life was certainly monotonous, and at first there were hours when the course of the new existence, so devoid of any change, oppressed him, but he experienced no tedium. His mental life was too rich, and the unburdening of his anxious soul too great a relief for that.

He had shunned serious thought since he left the philosopher's school; but here it soon afforded him the highest pleasure, for never had his mind moved so freely, so undisturbed by any limit or obstacle.

He did not need to search for what he hoped to find in the wilderness. His whole past life passed before him as if by its own volition. All that he had ever experienced, learned, thought, felt, rose before his mind with wonderful distinctness, and when he overlooked all his mental possessions, as if from a high watch-tower in the bright sunshine, he began to consider how he had used the details and how he could continue to do so.

Whatever he had seen incorrectly forced itself resistlessly upon him, yet here also the Greek nature, deeply implanted in his soul, guarded him, and it was easy for him to avoid self-torturing remorse. He only desired to util-

ize for improvement what he recognised as false.

When in this delicious silence he listened to the contradictory demands of his intellect and his senses, it often seemed as though he was present at a discussion between two guests who were exchanging their opinions concerning the subject that occupied his mind.

Here he first learned to deepen sound intellectual power and listen to the demands of the heart, or to repulse and condemn them.

Ah, yes, he was still blind; but never had he observed and recognised human life and its stage, down to the minutest detail, which his eyes refused to show him, so keenly as during these days. The phenomena which had attracted or repelled his vision here appeared nearer and more distinctly.

What he called "reality" and believed he understood thoroughly and estimated correctly, now disclosed many a secret which had previously remained concealed.

How defective his visual perception had been! how necessary it now seemed to subject his judgment to a new test! Doubtless a wealth of artistic subjects had come to him from the world of reality which he had placed far above everything else, but a greater and nobler one

from the sphere which he had shunned as unfruitful and corrupting.

As if by magic, the world of ideality opened before him in this exquisite silence. He again found in his own soul the joyous creative forces of Nature, and the surrounding stillness increased tenfold his capacity of perceiving it; nay, he felt as if creative energy dwelt in solitude itself.

His mind had always turned toward greatness. The desire to impress his works with the stamp of his own overflowing power had carried him far beyond moderation in modelling his struggling Mænads.

Now, when he sought for subjects, beside the smaller and more simple ones appeared mighty and manifold ones, often of superhuman grandeur.

Oh, if a higher power would at some future day permit him to model with his strong hands this battle of the Amazons, this Phœbus Apollo, radiant in beauty and the glow of victory, conquering the dragons of darkness!

Arachne, too, returned to his mind, and also Demeter. But she did not hover before him as the peaceful dispenser of blessings, the preserver of peace, but as the maternal earth goddess, robbed of her daughter Proserpina. How

varied in meaning was this myth!—and he strove to follow it in every direction.

Nothing more could come to the blind artist from Nature by the aid of his physical vision. The realm of reality was closed to him; but he had found the key to that of the ideal, and what he found in it proved to be no less true than the objects the other had offered.

How rich in forms was the new world which forced itself unbidden on his imagination! He who, a short time before, had believed whatever could not be touched by the hands was useless for his art, now had the choice among a hundred subjects, full of glowing life, which were attainable by no organ of the senses. He need fear to undertake none, if only it was worthy of representation; for he was sure of his ability, and difficulty did not alarm him, but promised to lend creating for the first time its true charm.

And, besides, without the interest of animated conversation, without festal scenes where, with garlanded head and intoxicating pleasure soaring upward from the dust of earth, existence had seemed to him shallow and not worth the trouble it imposed upon mortals, solitude now offered him hours as happy as he had ever experienced while revelling with gay companions.

At first many things had disturbed them,

especially the dissatisfied, almost gloomy disposition of his Egyptian slave, who, born in the city and accustomed to its life, found it unbearable to stay in the desert with the strange blind master, who lived like a porter, and ordered him to prepare his wretched fare with the hands skilled in the use of the pen.

But this living disturber of the peace was not to annoy the recluse long. Scarcely a fortnight after Bias's departure, the slave Patran, who had cost so extravagant a sum, vanished one morning with the sculptor's money and silver cup.

This rascally trick of a servant whom he had treated with almost brotherly kindness wounded Hermon, but he soon regarded the morose fellow's disappearance as a benefit.

When for the first time he drank water from an earthen jug, instead of a silver goblet, he thought of Diogenes, who cast his cup aside when he saw a boy raise water to his lips in his hand, yet with whom the great Macedonian conqueror of the world would have changed places "if he had not been Alexander."

The active, merry son of Bias's Amalekite friend gladly rendered him the help and guidance for which he had been reluctant to ask his ill-tempered slave, and he soon became ac-

customed to the simple fare of the nomads. Bread and milk, fruits and vegetables from his neighbour's little garden, satisfied him, and when the wine he had drunk was used, he contented himself, obedient to old Tabus's advice, with pure water.

As he still had several gold coins on his person, and wore two costly rings on his finger, he doubtless thought of sending to Clysma for meat, poultry, and wine, but he had refrained from doing so through the advice of the Amalekite woman, who anointed his eyes with Tabus's salve and protected them by a shade of fresh leaves from the dazzling rays of the desert sun. She, like the sorceress on the Owl's Nest, warned him against all viands that inflamed the blood, and he willingly allowed her to take away what she and her gray-haired father, the experienced head of the tribe, pronounced detrimental to his recovery.

At first the "beggar's fare" seemed repulsive, but he soon felt that it was benefiting him after the riotous life of the last few months.

One day, when the Amalekite took off his bandage, he thought he saw a faint glimmer of light, and how his heart exulted at this faint foretaste of the pleasure of sight!

In an instant hope sprang up with fresh

power in his excitable soul, and his lost cheerfulness returned to him like a butterfly to the newly opened flower. The image of his beloved Daphne rose before him in sunny radiance, and he saw himself in his studio in the service of his art.

He had always been fond of children, and the little ones in the Amalekite family quickly discovered this, and crowded around their blind friend, who played all sorts of games with them, and in spite of the bandaged eyes, over which spread a broad shade of green leaves, could make whistles with his skilful artist hands from the reeds and willow branches they brought.

He saw before him the object to which his heart still clung as distinctly as if he need only stretch out his hand to draw it nearer, and perhaps—surely and certainly, the Amalekite said—the time would come when he would behold it also with his bodily eyes.

If the longing should be fulfilled! If his eyes were again permitted to convey to him what formerly filled his soul with delight! Yes, beauty was entitled to a higher place than truth, and if it again unfolded itself to his gaze, how gladly and gratefully he would pay homage to it with his art!

The hope that he might enjoy it once more

now grew stronger, for the glimmer of light became brighter, and one day, when his skilful nurse again took the bandage from his milk-white pupils, he saw something long appear, as if through a mist. It was only the thorny acacia tree at his tent; but the sight of the most beautiful of beautiful things never filled him with more joyful gratitude.

Then he ordered the less valuable of his two rings to be sold to offer a sacrifice to health-bestowing Isis, who had a little temple in Clysma.

How fervently he now prayed also to the great Apollo, the foe of darkness and the lord of everything light and pure! How yearningly he besought Aphrodite to bless him again with the enjoyment of eternal beauty, and Eros to heal the wound which his arrow had inflicted upon his heart and Daphne's, and bring them together after so much distress and need!

When, after the lapse of another week, the bandage was again removed, his inmost soul rejoiced, for his eyes showed him the rippling emerald-green surface of the Red Sea, and the outlines of the palms, the tents, the Amalekite woman, her boy, and her two long-eared goats.

How ardently he thanked the gracious deities who, in spite of Straton's precepts, were no

mere figments of human imagination and, as if he had become a child again, poured forth his overflowing heart with mute gratitude to his mother's soul!

The artist nature, yearning to create, began to stir within more ceaselessly than ever before. Already he saw clay and wax assuming forms beneath his skilful hands; already he imagined himself, with fresh power and delight, cutting majestic figures from blocks of marble, or, by hammering, carving, and filing, shaping them from gold and ivory.

And he would not take what he intended to create solely from the world of reality perceptible to the senses. Oh, no! He desired to show through his art the loftiest of ideals. How could he still shrink from using the liberty which he had formerly rejected, the liberty of drawing from his own inner consciousness what he needed in order to bestow upon the ideal images he longed to create the grandeur, strength, and sublimity in which he beheld them rise before his purified soul!

Yet, with all this, he must remain faithful to truth, copy from Nature what he desired to represent. Every finger, every lock of hair, must correspond with reality to the minutest detail, and yet the whole must be pervaded and pene-

trated, as the blood flows through the body, by the thought that filled his mind and soul.

A reflected image of the ideal and of his own mood, faithful to truth, free, and yet obedient to the demands of moderation—in this sentence Hermon summed up the result of his solitary meditations upon art and works of art. Since he had found the gods again, he perceived that the Muse had confided to him a sacerdotal office. He intended to perform its duties, and not only attract and please the beholder's eyes through his works, but elevate his heart and mind, as beauty, truth, grandeur, and eternity uplifted his own soul. He recognised in the tireless creative power which keeps Nature ever new, fresh, and bewitching, the presence of the same deity whose rule manifested itself in the life of his own soul.

So long as he denied its existence, he had recognised no being more powerful than himself; now that he again felt insignificant beside it, he knew himself to be stronger than ever before, that the greatest of all powers had become his ally. Now it was difficult for him to understand how he could have turned away from the deity. As an artist he, too, was a creator, and, while he believed those who considered the universe had come into existence of itself, instead

of having been created, he had robbed himself of the most sublime model. Besides, the greatest charm of his noble profession was lost to him. Now he knew it, and was striving toward the goal attainable by the artist alone among mortals—to hold intercourse with the deity, and by creations full of its essence elevate the world to its grandeur and beauty.

One day, at the end of the second month of his stay in the desert, when the Amalekite woman removed the bandage, her boy, whose form he distinguished as if through a veil, suddenly exclaimed: "The white cover on your eyes is melting! They are beginning to sparkle a little, and soon they will be perfectly well, and you can carve the lion's head on my cane."

Perhaps the artist might really have succeeded in doing so, but he forbade himself the attempt.

He thought that the time for departure had now arrived, and an irresistible longing urged him back to the world and Daphne.

But he could not resist the entreaties of the old sheik and his daughter not to risk what he had gained, so he continued to use the shade of leaves, and allowed himself to be persuaded to defer his departure until the dimness which still

prevented his seeing anything distinctly passed away.

True, the beautiful peace which he had enjoyed of late was over and, besides, anxiety for the dear ones in distant lands was constantly increasing. He had had no news of them for a long time, and when he imagined what fate might have overtaken Archias, and his daughter with him, if he had been carried back to the enraged King in Alexandria, a terrible dread took possession of him, which scattered even joy in his wonderful recovery to the four winds, and finally led him to the resolution to return to the world at any risk and devote himself to those whose fate was nearer to his heart than his own weal and woe.

CHAPTER XIII.

Hermon, filled with longing, went down toward evening to the shore.

The sun was setting, and the riot of colours in the western horizon seemed like a mockery of the torturing anxiety which had mastered his soul.

He did not notice the boat that was approaching the land; many travellers who intended to go through Arabia Petrea landed here, and for several days—he knew why—there had been more stir in these quiet waters.

Suddenly he was surprised by the ringing shout with which he had formerly announced his approach to Myrtilus.

Unconsciously agitated by joy, as if the sunset glow before him had suddenly been transformed into the dawn of a happy day, he answered by a loud cry glad with hope. Although his dim eyes did not yet permit him to distinguish who was standing erect in the boat, wav-

ing greetings to him, he thought he knew whom this exquisite evening was bringing.

Soon his own name reached him. It was his "wise Bias" who shouted, and soon, with a throbbing heart, he held out both hands to him.

The freedman had performed his commission in the best possible manner, and was now no longer bound to silence by oath.

Ledscha had left him and Myrtilus to themselves and, as Bias thought he had heard, had sailed with the Gaul Lutarius for Parætonium, the frontier city between the kingdom of Egypt and that of Cyrene.

Myrtilus felt stronger than he had done for a long time, and had sent him back to the blind friend who would need him more than he did.

But worthy Bias also brought messages from Archias and Daphne. They were well, and his uncle now had scarcely any cause to fear pursuers.

Before the landing of the boat, the shade had covered Hermon's eyes; but when, after the freedman's first timid question about his sight, he raised it again, at the same time reporting and showing what progress he had already made toward recovery, the excess of joy overpowered the freedman, and sometimes laughing, sometimes weeping, he kissed the convalescent's

hands and simple robe. It was some time before he calmed himself again, then laying his forefinger on the side of his nose, he said: "Therein the immortals differ from human beings. We sculptors can only create good work with good tools, but the immortals often use the very poorest of all to accomplish the best things. You owe your sight to the hate of this old witch and mother of pirates, so may she find peace in the grave. She is dead. I heard it from a fellow-countryman whom I met in Heroöpolis. Her end came soon after our visit."

Then Bias related what he knew of Hermon's uncle, of Daphne, and Myrtilus.

Two letters were to give him further particulars.

They came from the woman he loved and from his friend, and as soon as Bias had lighted the lamp in the tent, at the same time telling his master in advance many items of news they contained, he set about the difficult task of reading.

He had certainly scarcely become a master of this art on board the Hydra, yet his slow performance did all honour to the patience of his teacher Myrtilus.

He began with Daphne's letter, but by the desire of prudent Archias it communicated few

facts. But the protestations of love and expressions of longing which filled it pierced the freedman's soul so deeply that his voice more than once failed while reading them.

Myrtilus's letter, on the contrary, gave a minute description of his mode of life, and informed his friend what he expected for him and himself in the future. The contents of both relieved Hermon's sorely troubled heart, made life with those who were dearest to him possible, and explained many things which the reports of the slave had not rendered perfectly clear.

Archias had gone with Daphne to the island of Lesbos, his mother's native city. The ships which conveyed travellers to Pergamus, where Myrtilus was living, touched at this port, and Bias, to whom Hermon had confided the refuge of the father and daughter, had sought them there, and found them in a beautiful villa.

After being released from his oath, Myrtilus had put himself into communication with his uncle, and just before Bias's departure the merchant had come to Pergamus with his daughter. As he had the most cordial reception from the Regent Philetærus, he seemed inclined to settle permanently there.

As for Myrtilus, he had cast anchor with Ledscha in the little Mysian seaport town of

Pitane, near the mouth of the Caicus River, on which, farther inland, was the rapidly growing city of Pergamus.

She had found a hospitable welcome in the family of a seafarer who were relatives, while the Gaul continued his voyage to obtain information about his tribe in Syria. But he had already returned when Bias reached Pitane with the two talents intended for him. Myrtilus had availed himself of Ledscha's permission long before and gone to Pergamus, where he had lived and worked in secrecy until, after the freedman's return from Ledscha, who at once left Pitane with the Gaul, he was released from his oath.

During the absence of Bias he had modelled a large relief, a triumphal procession of Dionysus, and as the renown of his name had previously reached Pergamus, the artists and the most distinguished men in the city flocked to his studio to admire the work of the famous Alexandrian.

Soon Philetærus, who had founded the Pergamenian kingdom seven years before, and governed it with great wisdom, came to Myrtilus. Like his nephew and heir Eumenes, he was a friend to art, and induced the laurel-crowned Alexandrian to execute the relief, modelled in

clay, in marble for the Temple of Dionysus at Pergamus.

The heir to the throne of Philetærus, who was now advancing in years, was especially friendly to Myrtilus, and did everything in his power to bind him to Pergamus.

He succeeded, for in the beautiful house, located in an extremely healthful site, which Eumenes had assigned for a residence and studio to the Alexandrian artist, whose work he most ardently admired, and whom he regarded as the most welcome of guests, Myrtilus felt better physically than he had for years. Besides, he thought that, for many reasons, his friend would be less willing to settle in Alexandria, and that the presence of his uncle and Daphne would attract him to Pergamus.

Moreover, Hermon surely knew that if he came to him as a blind man he would find a brother; if he came restored to sight, he would also find a brother, and likewise a fellow-artist with whom he could live and work.

Myrtilus had told the heir to the throne of Pergamus of his richly gifted blind relative, and of the peculiarity of his art, and Eumenes eagerly endeavoured to induce his beloved guest to persuade his friend to remove to his capital, where there was no lack of distinguished leeches.

If Hermon remained blind, he would honour him; if he recovered his sight, he would give him large commissions.

How deeply these letters moved the heart of the recovering man! What prospects they opened for his future life, for love, friendship, and, not least, for his art!

If he could see—if he could only see again!

This exclamation blended with everything he thought, felt, and uttered. Even in sleep it haunted him. To regain the clearness of vision he needed for his work, he would willingly have submitted to the severest tortures.

In Alexandria alone lived the great leeches who could complete the work which the salve of an ignorant old woman had begun. Thither he must go, though it cost him liberty and life. The most famous surgeon of the Museum at the capital had refused his aid under other circumstances. Perhaps he would relent if Philippus, a friend of Erasistratus, smoothed the way for him, and the old hero was now living very near. The ships, whose number on the sea at his feet was constantly increasing, were attracted hither by the presence of the Egyptian King and Queen on the isthmus which connects Asia and Africa. The priest of Apollo at Clysma, and other distinguished Greeks whom he

met there, had told him the day before yesterday, and on two former visits to the place, what was going on in the world, and informed him how great an honour awaited the eastern frontier in these days. The appearance of their Majesties in person must not only mean the founding of a city, the reception of a victorious naval commander, and the consecration of a restored temple, but also have still deeper causes.

During the last few years severe physical suffering had brought the unfortunate second king of the house of Ptolemy to this place to seek the aid of the ancient Egyptian gods, and, besides the philosophy, busy himself with the mystic teachings and magic arts of their priesthood.

Only a short period of life seemed allotted to the invalid ruler, and the service of the time-honoured god of the dead, to whom he had erected one of the most magnificent temples in the world at Alexandria, to which Egyptians and Hellenes repaired with equal devotion, opened hopes for the life after death which seemed to him worthy of examination.

For this reason also he desired to secure the favour of the Egyptian priesthood.

For this purpose, for the execution of his wise and beneficent arrangements, as well as for

the gratification of his expensive tastes, large sums of money were required; therefore he devoted himself with especial zeal to enlarging the resources of his country, already so rich by nature.

In all these things he had found an admirable assistant in his sister Arsinoë. As the daughter of the father and mother to whom he himself owed existence, he could claim for her unassailable legitimacy the same recognition from the priesthood, and the same submission from the people rendered to his own person, whom the religion of the country commanded them to revere as the representative of the sun god.

As marriages between brothers and sisters had been customary from ancient times, and were sanctioned by religion and myth, he had married the second Arsinoë, his sister, immediately after the banishment of the first Queen of this name.

After the union with her, he called himself Philadelphus—brotherly love—and honoured his sister and wife with the same name.

True, this led the sarcastic Alexandrians to utter many a biting, more or less witty jest, but he never had cause to regret his choice; in spite of her forty years, and more than one bloody deed which before her marriage to him

she had committed as Queen of Thrace and as a widow, the second Arsinoë was always a pattern of regally aristocratic, dignified bearing and haughty womanly beauty.

Though the first Philadelphus could expect no descendants from her, he had provided for securing them through her, for he had induced her to adopt the first Arsinoë's three children, who had been taken from their exiled mother.

Arsinoë was now accompanying her royal husband Philadelphus to the eastern frontier.

There the latter expected to name the city to be newly founded "Arsinoë" for her, and—to show his esteem for the priesthood—to consecrate in person the new Temple of Tum in the city of Pithom, near Heroöpolis.

Lastly, the monarch had been endeavouring to form new connections with the coast countries of eastern Africa, and open them to Egyptian commerce.

Admiral Eumedes, the oldest son of Philippus and Thyone, had succeeded in doing this most admirably, for the distinguished commander had not only founded on the Ethiopian shore of the Red Sea a city which he named for the King "Ptolemais," but also won over the princes and tribes of that region to Egypt.

He was now returning from Ethiopia with a wealth of treasures.

After the brilliant festivals the invalid King, with his new wife, was to give himself up to complete rest for a month in the healthful air of the desert region which surrounded Pithom, far from the tumult of the capital and the exhausting duties of government.

The magnificent shows which were to be expected, and the presence of the royal pair, had attracted thousands of spectators on foot or horseback, and by water, and the morning after Bias's return the sea near Clysma was swarming with vessels of all kinds and sizes.

It was more than probable that Philippus, the father, and Thyone, the mother of the famous returning Admiral Eumedes, would not fail to be present at his reception on his native soil, and therefore Hermon wished to seek out his dear old friends in Heroöpolis, where the greeting was to take place, and obtain their advice.

The boat on which the freedman had come was at the disposal of his master and himself. Before Hermon entered it, he took leave, with an agitated heart and open hand, of his Amalekite friends and, in spite of the mist which still obscured everything he beheld, he perceived

how reluctantly the simple dwellers in the wilderness saw him depart.

When the master and servant entered the boat, in spite of the sturdy sailors who manned it, it proved even more difficult than they had feared to make any progress; for the whole narrow end of the arm of the sea, which here extended between Egypt and Arabia Petrea, was covered with war galleys and transports, boats and skiffs. The two most magnificent state galleys from Heroöpolis were coming here, bearing the ambassadors who, in the King's name, were to receive the fleet and its commander. Other large and small, richly equipped, or unpretending ships and boats were filled with curious spectators.

What a gay, animated scene! What brilliant, varied, strange, hitherto unseen objects were gathered here: vessels of every form and size, sails white, brown, and black, and on the state galleys and boats purple, blue, and every colour, adorned with more or less costly embroidery! What rising and falling of swiftly or slowly moving oars!

"From Alexandria!" cried Bias, pointing to a state galley which the King was sending to the commander of the southern fleet.

"And there," remarked Hermon, proud of

his regained power of distinguishing one thing from another, and letting his eyes rest on one of the returning transports, on whose deck stood six huge African elephants, whose trumpeting mingled with the roaring of the lions and tigers on the huge freight vessels, and the exulting shouts of the men and women in the ships and boats.

"After the King's heart!" exclaimed Bias. "He probably never received at one time before so large an accession to his collection of rare animals. What is the transport with the huge lotus flower on the prow probably bringing?"

"Oh, and the monkeys and parrots over yonder!" joyously exclaimed the Amalekite boy who had been Hermon's guide, and had accompanied him into the boat. Then he suddenly lowered his voice and, fearing that his delight might give pain to the less keen-sighted man whom he loved, he asked, "You can see them, my lord, can't you?"

"Certainly, my boy, though less plainly than you do," replied Hermon, stroking the lad's dark hair.

Meanwhile the admiral's ship had approached the shore.

Bias pointed to the poop, where the com-

mander Eumedes was standing directing the course of the fleet.

As if moulded in bronze, a man thoroughly equal to his office, he seemed, in spite of the shouts, greetings, and acclamations thundering around him, to close his eyes and ears to the vessels thronging about his ship and devote himself body and soul to the fulfilment of his duty. He had just embraced his father and mother, who had come here to meet him.

"The King undoubtedly sent by his father the laurel wreath on his helmet," observed Bias, pointing to the admiral. "So many honours while he is still so young! When you went to the wrestling school in Alexandria, Eumedes was scarcely eight years older than you, and I remember how he preferred you to the others. A sign, and he will notice us and allow you to go on his ship, or, at any rate, send us a boat in which we can enter the canal."

"No, no," replied Hermon. "My call would disturb him now."

"Then let us make ourselves known to the Lady Thyone or her husband," the freedman continued. "They will certainly take us on their large state galley, from which, though your eyes do not yet see as far as a falcon's, not a ship, not a man, not a movement will escape them."

But Hermon added one more surprise to the many which he had already given, for he kindly declined Bias's well-meant counsel, and, resting his hand on the Amalekite boy's shoulder, said modestly: "I am no longer the Hermon whom Eumedes preferred to the others. And the Lady Thyone must not be reminded of anything sad in this festal hour for the mother's heart. I shall meet her to-morrow, or the day after, and yet I had intended to let no one who is loyal to me look into my healing eyes before Daphne."

Then he felt the freedman's hand secretly press his, and it comforted him, after the sorrowful thoughts to which he had yielded, amid the shouts of joy ringing around him. How quietly, with what calm dignity, Eumedes received the well-merited homage, and how disgracefully the false fame had bewildered his own senses!

Yet he had not passed through the purifying fire of misfortune in vain! The past should not cloud the glad anticipation of brighter days!

Drawing a long breath, he straightened himself into a more erect posture, and ordered the men to push the boat from the shore. Then he pressed a farewell kiss on the Amalekite boy's forehead, the lad sprang ashore, and the journey northward began.

At first the sailors feared that the crowd would be too great, and the boat would be refused admission to the canal; but the helmsman succeeded in keeping close behind a vessel of medium size, and the Macedonian guards of the channel put no obstacle in their countryman's way, while boats occupied by Egyptians and other barbarians were kept back.

In the Bitter Lakes, whose entire length was to be traversed, the ships had more room, and after a long voyage through dazzling sunlight, and along desolate shores, the boat anchored at nightfall at Heroöpolis.

Hermon and Bias obtained shelter on one of the ships which the sovereign had placed at the disposal of the Greeks who came to participate in the festivals to be celebrated.

Before his master went to rest, the freedman—whom he had sent out to look for a vessel bound to Pelusium and Alexandria the next day or the following one—returned to the ship.

He had talked with the Lady Thyone, and told Hermon from her that she would visit or send for him the next day, after the festival.

His own mother, the freedman protested, could not have rejoiced more warmly over the commencement of his recovery, and she would have come with him at once had not Philippus

prevented his aged wife, who was exhausted by the long journey.

The next morning the sun poured a wealth of radiant light upon the desert, the green water of the harbour, and the gray and yellow walls of the border fortress.

Three worlds held out their hands to one another on this water way surrounded by the barren wilderness—Egypt, Hellas, and Semitic Asia.

To the first belonged the processions of priests, who, with images of the gods, consecrated vessels, and caskets of relics, took their places at the edge of the harbour. The tawny and black, half-naked soldiers who, with high shields, lances, battle-axes and bows, gathered around strangely shaped standards, joined them, amid the beating of drums and blare of trumpets, as if for their protection. Behind them surged a vast multitude of Egyptians and dark-skinned Africans.

On the other side of the canal the Asiatics were moving to and fro. The best places for spectators had been assigned to the petty kings and princes of tribes, Phœnician and Syrian merchants, and well-equipped, richly armed warriors. Among them thronged owners of herds and seafarers from the coast. Until the recep-

tion began, fresh parties of bearded sons of the desert, in floating white bernouse, mounted on noble steeds, were constantly joining the other Asiatics.

The centre was occupied by the Greeks.

The appearance of every individual showed that they were rulers of the land, and that they deserved to be. How free and bold was their bearing! how brightly and joyously sparkled the eyes of these men, whose wreaths of green leaves and bright-hued flowers adorned locks anointed for the festivals! Strong and slender, they were conspicuous in their stately grace among the lean Egyptians, unbridled in their jests and jeers, and the excitable Asiatics.

Now the blare of trumpets and the roll of drums shook the air like echoing lightning and heavy peals of thunder; the Egyptian priests sang a hymn of praise to the God King and Goddess Queen, and the aristocratic priestesses of the deity tinkled the brass rings on the sistrum. Then a chorus of Hellenic singers began a polyphonous hymn, and amid its full, melodious notes, which rose above the enthusiastic shouts of "Hail!" from the multitude, King Ptolemy and his sister-wife showed themselves to the waiting throng. Seated on golden thrones borne on the broad shoulders of gigantic black

Ethiopians, and shaded by lofty canopies, both were raised above the crowd, whom they saluted by gracious gestures.

The athletic young bearers of the large round ostrich-feather fans which protected them from the sunbeams were followed in ranks by the monarch's "relatives" and "friends," the dignitaries, the dark and fair-haired bands of the guards of Grecian youths and boys, as well as divisions of the picked corps of the Hetairoi, Diadochi, and Epigoni, in beautiful plain Macedonian armour.

They were followed in the most informal manner by scholars from the Museum, many Hellenic artists, and wealthy gentlemen of Alexandria of Greek and Jewish origin, whom the King had invited to the festival.

In his train they went on board the huge galley on which the reception was to take place.

Scarcely had the last one stepped on the deck when it began.

Eumedes came from the admiral's galley to the King's. Ptolemy embraced him like a friend, and Arsinoë added a wreath of fresh roses to the laurel crown which the sovereign had sent the day before.

At the same time thundering plaudits echoed from the walls of the fortifications and broke,

sometimes rising, sometimes falling, against the ships and masts in the calm water of the harbour.

The King had little time to lose. Even festal joy must move swiftly. There were many and varied things to be seen and done; but in the course of an hour—so ran the order—this portion of the festivities must be over, and it was fully obeyed.

The hands and feet of the woolly-headed blacks who, amid loud acclamations, carried on shore the cages in which lions, panthers, and leopards shook the bars with savage fury, moved as if they were winged. The slender, dark-brown Ethiopians who led giraffes, apes, gazelles, and greyhounds past the royal pair rushed along as if they were under the lash; and the sixty elephants which Eumedes and his men had caught in the land of Chatyth moved at a rapid pace past the royal state galley.

At the sight of them the King joined in the cheers of thousands of voices on the shore; these giant animals were to him auxiliaries who could put to flight a whole corps of hostile cavalry, and Arsinoë-Philadelphus, the Queen, sympathized with his pleasure.

She raised her voice with her royal husband, and it seemed to the spectators on the shore as

if they had a share in the narrative when she listened to Eumedes's first brief report.

Only specimens of the gold and ivory, spices and rare woods, juniper trees and skins of animals which the ships brought home could be borne past their Majesties, and the black and brown men who carried them moved at a breathless rate.

The sun was still far from the meridian when the royal couple and their train withdrew from the scene of the reception ceremonial, and drove, in a magnificent chariot drawn by four horses, to the neighbouring city of Pithom, where new entertainments and a long period of rest awaited them. Hermon had seen, as if through a veil of white mists, the objects that aroused the enthusiasm of the throng, and so, he said to himself, it had been during the whole course of his life. Only the surface of the phenomena on which he fixed his eyes had been visible to him; he had not learned to penetrate further into their nature, fathom them to their depths, until he became blind.

If the gods fulfilled his hope, if he regained his vision entirely, and even the last mists had vanished, he would hold firmly to the capacity he had gained, and use it in life as well as in art.

CHAPTER XIV.

The messenger from Philippus appeared in the afternoon. It was the young hipparch who had studied in Athens and accompanied the commandant of Pelusium to Tennis the year before. He came charged with the commission to convey the artist, in the carriage of the gray-haired comrade of Alexander, to the neighbouring city of Pithom, where Philippus, by the King's command, was now residing.

On the way the hipparch told the sculptor that the Lady Thyone had recently done things unprecedented for a woman of her age.

She had been present at the founding of the city of Arsinoë, as well as at the laying of the corner stone of the temple which was to be consecrated to the new god Serapis in the neighbourhood. The day before she had welcomed her returning son before the entry of the fleet into the canal, and to-day had remained from the beginning to the end of his reception by the King, without being unduly wearied.

Her first thought, after the close of the ceremony, had concerned her convalescing young friend. New entertainments, in which the Queen commanded her to participate, awaited her in Pithom, but pleasure at the return of her famous son appeared to double her power of endurance.

Pithom was the sacred name of the temple precincts of the desert city of Thekut * near Heroöpolis, where the citizens lived and pursued their business.

The travellers reached the place very speedily. Garlands of flowers and hangings adorned the houses. The sacred precinct Pithom, above which towered the magnificently restored temple of the god Tum, was also still adorned with many superb ones, as well as lofty masts, banners, and triumphal arches.

Before they reached it the equipage passed the sumptuous tents which had been erected for the royal pair and their attendants. If Hermon had not known how long the monarch intended to remain here, their size and number would have surprised him.

A regular messenger and carrier-dove service had been established between Alexandria and Pithom for the period of Ptolemy's relaxation;

* The biblical Suchot.

and the sovereign was accompanied not only by several of the chief councillors and secretaries, but artists and some of the Museum scientists with whom he was on specially intimate terms, who were to adorn the festival on the frontier with their presence, and cheer the invalid King, who needed entertainment. Singers and actors also belonged to the train.

As they passed the encampment of the troops who accompanied the sovereign, the hipparch could show Hermon a magnificent military spectacle.

Heroöpolis was fortified, and belonged to the military colonies which Alexander the Great had established throughout all Egypt in order to win it over more quickly to Grecian customs. A Hellenic phalanx and Libyan mercenaries formed the garrison there, but at Pithom the King had gathered the flower of his troops around him, and this circumstance showed how little serious consideration the cautious ruler, who usually carefully regarded every detail, gave to the war with Cyrene, in which he took no personal part. The four thousand Gauls whom he had sent across the frontier as auxiliary troops promised to become perilous to the foe, who was also threatened in the rear by one of the most powerful Libyan tribes.

Therefore, the artist was assured by his military companion, Philadelphus could let the campaign take its course, and permit himself the brief period of rest in this strangely chosen place, which the leeches had advised.

The house where the aged couple lived with their son, Admiral Eumedes, was on the edge of the precincts of the temple. It belonged to the most distinguished merchant in the place, and consisted of a large open courtyard in the form of a square, surrounded by the building and its communicating wings.

When the hipparch led Hermon into this place a number of people had already assembled there. Soldiers and sailors stood in groups in the centre, awaiting the orders of the old general and his subordinate officers. Messengers and slaves, coming and going on various errands, were crossing it, and on the shady side benches and chairs stood under a light awning. Most of these were occupied by visitors who came to congratulate the mother of the fame-crowned admiral.

Thyone was reclining on a divan in their midst, submitting with a sigh to the social duties which her high position imposed upon her.

Her face was turned toward the large doorway of the main entrance, while she sometimes

greeted newly introduced guests, sometimes bade farewell to departing ones, and meanwhile answered and asked questions.

She had been more wearied by the exertions of the last few days than her animated manner revealed. Yet as soon as Hermon, leaning on the young hipparch's arm, approached her, she rose and cordially extended both hands to him. True, the recovering man was still unable to see her features distinctly, but he felt the maternal kindness with which she received him, and what his eyes could not distinguish his ears taught him in her warm greetings. His heart dilated and, after he had kissed her dear old hand more than once with affectionate devotion, she led him among her guests and presented him to them as the son of her dearest friend.

A strange stir ran through the assembled group, nearly all whose members belonged to the King's train, and the low whispers and murmurs around him revealed to Hermon that the false wreaths he wore had by no means been forgotten in this circle.

A painful feeling of discomfort overwhelmed the man accustomed to the silence of the desert, and a voice within cried with earnest insistence, "Away from here!"

But he had no time to obey it; an unusually

tall, broad-shouldered man, with a thick gray beard and grave, well-formed features, in whom he thought he recognised the great physician Erasistratus, approached Thyone, and asked, "The recluse from the desert with restored sight?"

"The same," replied the matron, and whispered to the other, who was really the famous scientist and leech whom Hermon had desired to seek in Alexandria. "Exhaustion will soon overcome me, and how many important matters I had to discuss with you and the poor fellow yonder!"

The physician laid his hand on the matron's temples, and, raising his voice, said in a tone of grave anxiety: "Exhaustion! It would be better for you, honoured lady, to keep your bed."

"Surely and certainly!" the wife of the chief huntsman instantly assented. "We have already taxed your strength far too long, my noble friend."

This welcome confession produced a wonderful effect upon the other visitors, and very soon the last one had vanished from the space under the awning and the courtyard. Not a single person had vouchsafed Hermon a greeting; for the artist, divested of the highest esteem, had been

involved in the ugly suspicion of having driven his uncle from Alexandria, and the monarch was said to have spoken unfavourably of him.

When the last one had left the courtyard, the leech exchanged a quick glance of understanding, which also included Hermon, with Thyone, and the majordomo received orders to admit no more visitors, while Erasistratus exclaimed gaily, "It is one of the physician's principal duties to keep all harmful things—including living ones —from his patient."

Then he turned to Hermon and had adready begun to question him about his health, when the majordomo announced another visitor. "A very distinguished gentleman, apparently," he said hastily; "Herophilus of Chalcedon, who would not be denied admittance."

Again the eyes of Erasistratus and the matron met, and the former hastened toward his professional colleague.

The two physicians stopped in the middle of the courtyard and talked eagerly together, while Thyone, with cordial interest, asked Hermon to tell her what she had already partially learned through the freedman Bias.

Finally Erasistratus persuaded the matron, who seemed to have forgotten her previous exhaustion, to share the consultation, but the con-

valescent's heart throbbed faster as he watched the famous leeches.

If these two men took charge of his case, the most ardent desire of his soul might be fulfilled, and Thyone was certainly trying to induce them to undertake his treatment; what else would have drawn her away from him before she had said even one word about Daphne?

The sculptor saw, as if through a cloud of dust, the three consulting together in the centre of the courtyard, away from the soldiers and messengers.

Hermon had only seen Erasistratus indistinctly, but before his eyes were blinded he had met him beside the sick-bed of Myrtilus, and no one who had once beheld it could forget the manly bearded face, with the grave, thoughtful eyes, whose gaze deliberately sought their goal.

The other also belonged to the great men in the realm of intellect. Hermon knew him well, for he had listened eagerly in the Museum to the lectures of the famous Herophilus, and his image also had stamped itself upon his soul.

Even at that time the long, smooth hair of the famous investigator had turned gray. From the oval of his closely shaven, well-formed face, with the long, thin, slightly hooked nose, a pair of sparkling eyes had gazed with penetrating

keenness at the listeners. Hermon had imagined Aristotle like him, while the bust of Pythagoras, with which he was familiar, resembled Erasistratus.

The convalescent could scarcely expect anything more than beneficial advice from Herophilus; for this tireless investigator rarely rendered assistance to the sick in the city, because the lion's share of his time and strength were devoted to difficult researches. The King favoured these by placing at his disposal the criminals sentenced to death. In his work of dissection he had found that the human brain was the seat of the soul, and the nerves originated in it.

Erasistratus, on the contrary, devoted himself to a large medical practice, though science owed him no less important discoveries.

The circle of artists had heard what he taught concerning the blood in the veins and the air bubbles in the arteries, how he explained the process of breathing, and what he had found in the investigation of the beating of the heart.

But he performed his most wonderful work with the knife in his hand as a surgeon. He had opened the body of one of Archias's slaves, who had been nursed by Daphne, and cured him after all other physicians had given him up.

When this man's voice reached Hermon, he

repeated to himself the words of refusal with which the great physician had formerly declined to devote his time and skill to him. Perhaps he was right then—and how differently he treated him to-day!

Thyone had informed the famous scientist of everything which she knew from Hermon, and had learned of the last period of his life through Bias.

She now listened with eager interest, sometimes completing Hermon's acknowledgments by an explanatory or propitiating word, as the leeches subjected him to a rigid examination, but the latter felt that his statements were not to serve curiosity, but an honest desire to aid him. So he spoke to them with absolute frankness.

When the examination was over, Erasistratus exclaimed to his professional colleague: "This old woman! Precisely as I would have prescribed. She ordered the strictest diet with the treatment. She rejected every strong internal remedy, and forbade him wine, much meat, and all kinds of seasoning. Our patient was directed to live on milk and the same simple gifts of Nature which I would have ordered for him. The herb juice in the clever sorceress's salve proved the best remedy. The incantations could do no harm. On the contrary, they often pro-

duce a wonderful effect on the mind, and from it proceed further."

Here Erasistratus asked to have a description of the troubles which still affected Hermon's vision, and the passionate eagerness with which the leeches gazed into his eyes strengthened the artist's budding hope. Never had he wished more ardently that Daphne was back at his side.

He also listened with keen attention when the scientists finally discussed in low tones what they had perceived, and caught the words, "White scar on the cornea," "leucoma," and "operation." He also heard Herophilus declare that an injury of the cornea by the flame of the torch was the cause of the blindness. In the work which led him to the discovery of the retina in the eye he had devoted himself sedulously to the organs of sight. This case seemed as if it had been created for his friend's keen knife.

What expectations this assurance aroused in the half-cured man, who felt as if the goal was already gained, when, shortly after, Erasistratus, the greatest physician of his time, offered to make the attempt in Alexandria to remove, by a few little incisions, what still dimmed his impaired vision!

Hermon, deeply agitated, thanked the leech,

and when Thyone perceived what was passing in his mind she ventured to ask the question whether it would not be feasible to perform the beneficent work here, and, if possible, the next day, and the surgeon was ready to fulfil the wish of the matron and the sufferer speedily. He would bring the necessary instruments with him. It only depended upon whether a suitable room could be found in the crowded city, and Thyone believed that such a one could not be lacking in the great building at her disposal.

A short conversation with the steward confirmed this opinion.

Then Erasistratus appointed the next morning for the operation. During the ceremony of consecrating the temple it would be quiet in the house and its vicinity. The preliminary fasting which he imposed upon his patients Hermon had already undergone.

"The pure desert air here," he added, "will be of the utmost assistance in recovery. The operation is slight, and free from danger. A few days will determine its success. I shall remain here with their Majesties, only—" and here he hesitated doubtfully—"where shall I find a competent assistant?"

Herophilus looked his colleague in the face with a sly smile, saying, "If you credit the old

man of Chalcedon with the needful skill, he is at your disposal."

"Herophilus!" cried Thyone, and tears of emotion wet her aged eyes, which easily overflowed; but when Hermon tried to give expression to his fervent gratitude in words, Erasistratus interrupted him, exclaiming, as he grasped his comrade's hand, "It honours the general in his purple robe, when he uses the spade in the work of intrenchment."

Many other matters were discussed before the professional friends withdrew, promising to go to work early the next morning.

They kept their word, and while the temple of the god Tum resounded with music and the chanting of hymns by the priests, whose dying notes entered the windows of the sick-room, while Queen Arsinoë-Philadelphus led the procession, and the King, who was prevented by the gout from entering and passing around the sanctuary at her side, ordered a monument to be erected in commemoration of this festival, the famous leeches toiled busily.

When the music and the acclamations of the crowd died away, their task was accomplished.

The great Herophilus had rendered his equally distinguished colleague the aid of an apprentice.

When Hermon's lips again tried to pour forth

his gratitude, Herophilus interrupted him with the exclamation: "Use the sight you have regained, young master, in creating superb works of art, and I shall be in *your* debt, since, with little trouble, I was permitted to render a service to the whole Grecian world."

Hermon spent seven long days and nights full of anxious expectation in a darkened room. Bias and a careful old female slave of the Lady Thyone watched him faithfully. Philippus, his wife, and his famous son Eumedes were allowed to pay him only brief visits; but Erasistratus watched the success of the operation every morning. True, it had been by no means dangerous, and certainly would not have required his frequent visits, but it pleased the investigator, reared in the school of Stoics, to watch how this warm-blooded young artist voluntarily submitted to live in accord with reason and Nature—the guiding stars of his own existence.

But Hermon opened his soul to his learned friend, and what Erasistratus thus learned strengthened the conviction of this great alleviator of physical pain that suffering and knowledge of self were the best physicians for the human soul. The scientist, who saw in the arts the noblest ornament of mortal life, anticipated with eager interest Hermon's future creative work.

On the seventh day the leech removed the bandage from his patient's eyes, and the cry of rapture with which Hermon clasped him in his arms richly rewarded him for his trouble and solicitude.

The restored man beheld in sharp, clear, undimmed outlines everything at which the physician desired him to look.

Now Erasistratus could write to his friend Herophilus in Alexandria that the operation was successful.

The sculptor was ordered to avoid the dazzling sunlight a fortnight longer, then he might once more use his eyes without restriction, and appeal to the Muse to help in creating works of art.

Thyone was present at this explanation.

After she had conquered the great emotion which for a time sealed her lips, her first question, after the physician's departure, was: "And Nemesis? She too, I think, has fled before the new light?"

Hermon pressed her hand still more warmly, exclaiming with joyous confidence: "No, Thyone! True, I now have little reason to fear the avenging goddess who pursues the criminal, but all the more the other Nemesis, who limits the excess of happiness. Will she not turn her swift

wheel, when I again, with clear eyes, see Daphne, and am permitted to work in my studio once more with keen eyes and steady hand?"

Now the barriers which had hitherto restricted Hermon's social intercourse also fell.

Eumedes, the commander of the fleet, often visited him, and while exchanging tales of their experiences they became friends.

When Hermon was alone with Thyone and her gray-haired husband, the conversation frequently turned upon Daphne and her father.

Then the recovered artist learned to whom Archias owed his escape from being sentenced to death and having his property confiscated. Papers, undeniably genuine, had proved what large sums had been advanced by the merchant during the period of the first Queen Arsinoë's conspiracy, and envious foes had done their best to prejudice the King and his sister-wife against Archias. Then the gray-haired hero fearlessly interceded for his friend, and the monarch did not remain deaf to his representations. King Ptolemy was writing the history of the conqueror of the world, and needed the aged comrade of Alexander, the sole survivor who had held a prominent position in the great Macedonian's campaigns. It might be detrimental to his work, on which he set great value, if he angered the old

warrior, who was a living source of history. Yet the King was still ill-disposed to the merchant, for while he destroyed Archias's death sentence which had been laid before him for his signature, he said to Philippus: "The money-bag whose life I give you was the friend of my foe. Let him beware that my arm does not yet reach him from afar!"

Nay, his resentment went so far that he refused to receive Hermon, when Eumedes begged permission to present the artist whose sight had been so wonderfully restored.

"To me he is still the unjustly crowned conspirator," Philadelphus replied. "Let him create the remarkable work which I formerly expected from him, and perhaps I shall have a somewhat better opinion of him, deem him more worthy of our favour."

Under these circumstances it was advisable for Archias and Daphne to remain absent from Alexandria, and the experienced couple could only approve Hermon's decision to go to Pergamus as soon as Erasistratus dismissed him. A letter from Daphne, which reached Thyone's hands at this time, increased the convalescent's already ardent yearning to the highest pitch. The girl entreated her maternal friend to tell her frankly the condition of her lover's health. If

he had recovered, he would know how to find her speedily; if the blindness was incurable, she would come herself to help him bear the burden of his darkened existence. Chrysilla would accompany her, but she could leave her father alone in Pergamus a few months without anxiety, for he had a second son there in his nephew Myrtilus, and had found a kind friend in Philetærus, the ruler of the country.

From this time Hermon daily urged Erasistratus to grant him entire liberty, but the leech steadfastly refused, though he knew whither his young friend longed to go.

Not until the beginning of the fourth week after the operation did he himself lead Hermon into the full sunlight, and when the recovered artist came out of the house he raised his hands in mute prayer, gushing from the inmost depths of his heart.

The King was to return to Alexandria in a few days, and at the same time Philippus and Thyone were going back to Pelusium. Hermon wished to accompany them there and sail thence on a ship bound for Pergamus.

With Eumedes he visited the unfamiliar scenes around him, and his newly restored gift of sight presented to him here many things that formerly he would scarcely have noticed, but

which now filled him with grateful joy. Gratitude, intense gratitude, had taken possession of his whole being. This feeling mastered him completely and seemed to be fostered and strengthened by every breath, every heart throb, every glance into his own soul and the future.

Besides, many beauties, nay, even many marvels, presented themselves to his restored eyes.

The whole wealth of the magic of beauty, intellect, and pleasure in life, characteristic of the Greek nature, appeared to have followed King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoë-Philadelphus hither.

Gardens had been created on the arid, sandy soil, whose gray and yellow surface extended in every direction, the water on the shore of the canal which united Pithom with the Nile not sufficing to render it possible to make even a narrow strip of arable land. Fresh water flowed from beautiful fountains adorned with rich carvings, and the pure fluid filled large porphyry and marble basins. Statues, single and in groups, stood forth in harmonious arrangement against green masses of leafage, and Grecian temples, halls, and even a theatre, rapidly constructed in the noblest forms from light material, invited the people to devotion, to the enjoyment of the most exquisite music, and to witness the perfect performance of many a tragedy and comedy.

Statues surrounded the hurriedly erected palæstra where the Ephebi every morning practised their nude, anointed bodies in racing, wrestling, and throwing the discus. What a delight it was to Hermon to feast his eyes upon these spectacles! What a stimulus to the artist, so long absorbed in his own thoughts, who had so recently returned from the wilderness to the world of active life, when he was permitted, in Erasistratus's tent, to listen to the great scholars who had accompanied the King to the desert! Only the regret that Daphne was not present to share his pleasure clouded Hermon's enjoyment, when Eumedes related to his parents, himself, and a few chosen friends the adventures encountered, and the experiences gathered in distant Ethiopia, on land and water, in battle and the chase, as investigator and commander.

The utmost degree of variety had entered into the simplicity of the monotonous desert, the most refined abundance for the intellect and the need of beauty appeared amid its barrenness.

The poet Callimachus had just arrived with a new chorus of singers, tablets by Antiphilus and Nicias had come to beautify the last days of the residence in the desert—when doves, the birds of Aphrodite, flew with the speed of lightning into Pithom, but instead of bringing a new

message of love and announcing the approach of fresh pleasure, they bore terrible tidings which put joy to flight and stifled mirthfulness.

The unbridled greed of rude barbarians had chosen Alexandria for its goal, and startled the royal pair and their chosen companions from the sea of pleasure where they would probably have remained for weeks.

The four thousand Gauls who had been obtained to fight against Cyrene were in the act of rushing rapaciously upon the richest city in the world. The most terrible danger hung like a black cloud over the capital founded by Alexander, whose growth had been so rapid. True, General Satyrus asserted that he was strong enough, with the troops at his disposal, to defeat the formidable hordes; but a second dove, sent by the epitropus who had remained in Alexandria, alluded to serious disaster which it would scarcely be possible to avert.

The doves now flew swiftly to and fro; but before the third arrived, Eumedes, the commander of the fleet just from Ethiopia, was already on the way to Alexandria with all the troops assembled on the frontier.

The King and Queen, with the corps of pages and the corps of youths, entered the boats waiting for them to return, drawn by teams of four

swift horses, to Memphis, to await within the impregnable fortress of the White Castle the restoration of security in the capital.

The Greeks prized the most valiant fearlessness so highly that no shadow could be suffered to rest upon the King's, and therefore the monarch's hurried departure was made in a way which permitted no thought of flight, and merely resembled impatient yearning for new festivals and the earnest desire to fulfil grave duties in another portion of the kingdom.

Many of the companions of the royal pair, among them Erasistratus, accompanied them. Hermon bade him farewell with a troubled heart, and the leech, too, parted with regret from the artist to whom, a year before, he had refused his aid.

CHAPTER XV.

HERMON went, with Philippus and Thyone, on board the ship which was to convey them through the new canal to Pelusium, where the old commandant had to plan all sorts of measures. In the border fortress the artist was again obliged to exercise patience, for no ship bound to Pergamus or Lesbos could be found in the harbour. Philippus had as much work as he could do, but all his arrangements were made when carrier doves announced that the surprise intended by the Gauls had been completely thwarted, and his son Eumedes was empowered to punish them.

The admiral would take his fleet to the Sebennytic mouth of the Nile.

Another dove came from King Ptolemy, and summoned the old general at once to the capital.

Philippus resolved to set off without delay and, as the way led past that mouth of the Nile, met his son on the voyage.

Hermon must accompany him and his wife

to Alexandria, whence, without entering the city, he could sail for Pergamus; ships bound to all the ports in the Mediterranean were always in one of the harbours of the capital. A galley ready to weigh anchor was constantly at the disposal of the commandant of the fortress, and the next noon the noble pair, with Hermon and his faithful Bias, went on board the Galatea.

The weather was dull, and gray clouds were sweeping across the sky over the swift vessel, which hugged the coast, and, unless the wind shifted, would reach the narrow tongue of land pierced by the Sebennytic mouth of the Nile before sunrise.

Though the general and his wife went to rest early, Hermon could not endure the close air of the cabin. Wrapped in his cloak he went on deck. The moon, almost full, was sailing in the sky, sometimes covered by dark clouds, sometimes leaving them behind. Like a swan emerging from the shadow of the thickets along the shore upon the pure bosom of the lake, it finally floated into the deep azure of the radiant firmament. Hermon's heart swelled.

How he rejoiced that he was again permitted to behold the starry sky, and satiate his soul with the beauty of creation! What delight it gave him that the eternal wanderers above were no

longer soulless forms, that he again saw in the pure silver disk above friendly Selene, in the rolling salt waves the kingdom of Poseidon! To-morrow, when the deep blue water was calm, he would greet the sea-god Glaucus, and when snowy foam crowned the crests of the waves, white-armed Thetis. The wind was no longer an empty sound to him; no, it, too, came from a deity. All Nature had regained a new, divine life. Doubtless he felt much nearer to his childhood than before, but he was infinitely less distant from the eternal divinity. And all the forms, so full of meaning, which appeared to him from Nature, and from every powerful emotion of his own soul, were waiting to be represented by his art in the noblest of forms, those of human beings. There were few with whose nature he had not become familiar in the darkness and solitude that once surrounded him.

When he began to create again, he had only to summon them, and he awaited, with the suspense of the general who is in command of new troops on the eve of battle, the success of his own work after the great transformation which had taken place in him.

What a stress and tumult!

He had controlled it since the first hour when he regained his full vision. He would fain have

transformed the moon into the sun, the ship into the studio, and begun to model.

He knew, too, what he desired to create.

He would model an Apollo trampling under foot the slain dragon of darkness.

He would succeed in this work now. And as he looked up and saw Selene just emerging again from the black cloud island, the thought entered his mind that it was a moonlight night like this when all the unspeakably terrible misfortune occurred—which was now past.

Yet neither the calm wanderer above nor a resentful woman had exposed him to the persecution of Nemesis. In the stillness of the desert he had perceived what had brought all this terrible suffering upon him; but he would not repeat it to himself now, for he felt within his soul the power to remain faithful to his best self in the future.

With clear eyes he gazed keenly and blithely at the new life. Nothing, least of all, futile self-torturing regret for faults committed, should cloud the fair morning dawning anew for him, which summoned him to active work, to gratitude and love.

Uttering a sigh of relief, he paced the deck—now brilliantly illuminated by silvery light—with long strides.

The moon above his head reminded him of Ledscha. He was no longer angry with her. The means by which she had intended to destroy him had been transformed into a benefit, and while in the desert he had perceived how often man finally blesses, as the highest gain, what he at first regarded as the most cruel affliction.

How distinctly the image of the Biamite again stood before his agitated soul!

Had he not loved her once?

Or how had it happened that, though his heart was Daphne's, and hers alone, he had felt wounded and insulted when his Bias, who was leaning over the railing of the deck yonder, gazing at the glittering waves, had informed him that Ledscha had been accompanied in her flight from her unloved husband by the Gaul whose life he, Hermon, had saved? Was this due to jealousy or merely wounded vanity at being supplanted in a heart which he firmly believed belonged, though only in bitter hate, solely to him?

She certainly had not forgotten him, and while the remembrance of her blended with the yearning for Daphne which never left him, he sat down and gazed out into the darkness till his head drooped on his breast.

Then a dream showed the Biamite to the slumbering man, yet no longer in the guise of a

woman, but as the spider Arachne. She increased before his eyes to an enormous size and alighted upon the pharos erected by Sostratus. Uninjured by the flames of the lighthouse, above which she hovered, she wove a net of endlessly long gray threads over the whole city of Alexandria, with its temples, palaces, and halls, harbours and ships, until Daphne suddenly appeared with a light step and quietly cut one after the other.

Suddenly a shrill whistle aroused him. It was the signal of the flute-player to relieve the rowers.

A faint yellow hue was now tingeing the eastern horizon of the gray, cloudy sky. At his left extended the flat, dull-brown coast line, which seemed to lie lower than the turbid waves of the restless sea. The cold morning wind was blowing light mists over the absolutely barren shore. Not a tree, not a bush, not a human dwelling was to be seen in this dreary wilderness. Wherever the eye turned, there was nothing but sand and water, which united at the edge of the land. Long lines of surf poured over the arid desert, and, as if repelled by the desolation of this strand, returned to the wide sea whence they came.

The shrill screams of the sea-gulls behind the ship, and the hoarse, hungry croaking of the

ravens on the shore blended with the roaring of the waves. Hermon shuddered at this scene. Shivering, he wrapped his cloak closer around him, yet he did not go to the protecting cabin, but followed the nauarch, who pointed out to him the numerous vessels which, in a wide curve, surrounded the place where the Sebennytic arm of the Nile pierced the tongue of land to empty into the sea.

The experienced seaman did not know what ships were doing there, but it was hardly anything good; for ravens in a countless multitude were to be seen on the shore and all moved toward the left.

Philippus's appearance on deck interrupted the nauarch. He anxiously showed the birds to the old hero also, and the latter's only reply was, "Watch the helm and sails!"

Yonder squadron, Philippus said to the artist, was a part of his son's fleet; what brought it there was a mystery to him too.

After the early meal, the galley of Eumedes approached his father's trireme. Two other galleys, not much inferior in size, were behind, and probably fifty smaller vessels were moving about the mouth of the Nile and the whole dreary tongue of land.

All belonged to the royal war fleet, and the

deck of every one was crowded with armed soldiers.

On one a forest of lances bristled in the murky air, and upon its southward side a row of archers, each man holding his bow in his hand, stood shoulder to shoulder.

At what mark were their arrows to be aimed?

The men on board the Galatea saw it distinctly, for the shore was swarming with human figures, here standing crowded closely together, like horses attacked by a pack of wolves; yonder running, singly or in groups, toward the sea or into the land. Dark spots on the light sand marked the places where others had thrown themselves on the ground, or, kneeling, stretched out their arms as if in defence.

Who were the people who populated this usually uninhabited, inhospitable place so densely and in so strange a manner?

This could not be distinguished from the Galatea with the naked eye, but Philippus thought that they were the Gauls whose punishment had been intrusted to his son, and it soon proved that the old general was right; for just as the Galatea was approaching the shore, a band of twenty or thirty men plunged into the sea. They were Gauls. The light complexions and fair and red bristling hair showed this—Philippus

knew them, and Hermon remembered the hordes of men who had rushed past him on the ride to Tennis.

But the watchers were allowed only a short time for observation; brief shouts of command rang from the ships near them, long bows were raised in the air, and one after another of the light-hued forms in the water threw up its arms, sprang up, or sank motionless into the waves around them, which were dyed with a crimson stain.

The artist shuddered; the gray-haired general covered his head with his cloak, and the Lady Thyone followed his example, uttering her son's name in a tone of loud lamentation.

The nauarch pointed to the black birds in the air and close above the shore and the water; but the shout, "A boat from the admiral's galley!" soon attracted the attention of the voyagers on the Galatea in a new direction.

Thirty powerful rowers were urging the long, narrow boat toward them. Sometimes raised high on the crest of a mountain wave, sometimes sinking into the hollow, it completed its trip, and Eumedes mounted a swinging rope ladder to the Galatea's deck as nimbly as a boy.

Here the young commander of the fleet hastened toward his parents. His mother sobbed

aloud at his anything but cheerful greeting; Philippus said mournfully, "I have heard nothing yet, but I know all."

"Father," replied the admiral, and raising the helmet from his head, covered with brown curls, he added mournfully: "First as to these men here. It will teach you to understand the other terrible things. Your Uncle Archias's house was destroyed; yonder men were the criminals."

"In the capital!" Philippus exclaimed furiously, and Hermon cried in no less vehement excitement: "How did my uncle get the ill will of these monsters? But as the vengeance is in your hands, they will atone for this breach of the peace!"

"Severely, perhaps too severely," replied Eumedes gloomily, and Philippus asked his son how this evil deed could have happened, and the purport of the King's command.

The admiral related what had occurred in the capital since his departure from Pithom.

The four thousand Gauls who had been sent by King Antiochus to the Egyptian army as auxiliary troops against Cyrene refused, before reaching Parætonium, on the western frontier of the Egyptian kingdom, to obey their Greek commanders. As they tried to force them to continue

their march, the barbarians left them bound in the road. They spared their lives, but rushed with loud shouts of exultation toward Alexandria, which was close at hand.

They had learned that the city was almost stripped of troops, and the most savage instinct urged them toward the wealthy capital.

Without encountering any resistance, they broke through the necropolis into Alexandria, crossed the Draco canal, and marched past the unfinished Temple of Serapis through the Rhakotis. At the Canopic Way they turned eastward and rushed through this main artery of traffic till, in the Brucheium, they hastened in a northerly direction toward the sea.

South of the Theatre of Dionysus they halted. One division turned toward the market-place, another toward the royal palaces.

Until they reached the Brucheium the hordes, so eager for booty, had refrained from plunder and pillage.

Their whole strength was to be reserved, as the examination proved, for the attack upon the royal palaces. Several people who were thoroughly familiar with Alexandria had acted as guides.

The instigator of the mutiny was said to be a Gallic captain who had taken part in the sur-

prise of Delphi, but, having ventured to punish disobedient soldiers, he was killed. A bridge-builder from the ranks, and his wife, who was not of Gallic blood, had taken his place.

This woman, a resolute and obstinate but rarely beautiful creature, when the division that was to attack the royal palaces was marching past the house which Hermon had occupied as the heir of Myrtilus, pressed forward herself across the threshold, to order the mutineers who followed her to destroy and steal whatever came in their way. The bridge-builder went to the market-place, and in pillaging the wealthy merchants' houses began with Archias's. Meanwhile it was set on fire and, with the large warehouses adjoining it, was burned to the foundation walls.

But the robbers were to obtain no permanent success, either in the market-place or in Myrtilus's house, which was diagonally opposite to the palæstra; for General Satyrus, at the first tidings of their approach, had collected all the troops at his disposal and the crews of several war galleys, and imprisoned the division in the market-place as though in a mouse-trap. The bands to which the woman belonged were forced by the cavalry into the palæstra and the neighbouring Mäander, and kept there until Eumedes

brought re-enforcements and compelled the Gauls to surrender.

The King sent from Memphis the order to take the vanquished men to the tongue of land where they now were, and could easily be imprisoned between the sea and the Sebennytic inland lake. They were guilty of death to the last man, and starvation was to perform the executioner's office upon them.

He, Eumedes, the admiral concluded, was in the King's service, and must do what his commander in chief ordered.

"Duty," sighed Philippus; "yet what a punishment!"

He held out his hand to his son as he spoke, but the Lady Thyone shook her head mournfully, saying: "There are four thousand over yonder; and the philosopher and historian on the throne, the admirable art critic who bestows upon his capital and Egypt all the gifts of peace, who understands how to guard and develop it better than any one else—yet what influence the gloomy powers exert upon him!"

Here she hesitated, and went on in a low whisper: "The blood of two brothers stains his hand and his conscience. The oldest, to whom the throne would have belonged, he exiled. And our friend, Demetrius Phalereus, his father's

noble councillor! Because you, Philippus, interceded for him—though you were in a position of command, because Ptolemy knows your ability—you were sent to distant Pelusium, and there we should be still——"

"Guard your tongue, wife!" interrupted the old general in a tone of grave rebuke. "The vipers on the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt symbolize the King's swift power over life and death. To the Egyptians the Philadelphi, Ptolemy and Arsinoë, are gods, and what cause have we to reproach them except that they use their omnipotence?"

"And, mother," Eumedes eagerly added, "do not the royal pair on the throne merely follow the example of far greater ones among the immortal gods? When the very Gauls who are devoted to death yonder, greedy for booty, attacked Delphi, four years ago, it was the august brother and sister, Apollo and Artemis, who sent them to Hades with their arrows, while Zeus hurled his thunderbolts at them and ordered heavy boulders to fall upon them from the shaken mountains. Many of the men over there fled from destruction at Delphi. Unconverted, they added new crimes to the old ones, but now retribution will overtake them. The worse the crime, the more bloody the vengeance.

Even the last must die, as my sovereign commands; only I shall determine the mode of death according to my own judgment, and at the same time, mother, feel sure of your approval. Instead of lingering starvation, I shall use swift arrows. Now you know what you were obliged to learn. It would be wise, mother, for you to leave this abode of misery. Duty summons me to my ship."

He held out his hand to his parents and Hermon as he spoke, but the latter clasped it firmly, exclaiming in a tone of passionate emotion, "What is the name of the woman to whom, though she is not of their race, the lawless barbarians yielded?"

"Ledscha," replied the admiral.

Hermon started as if stung by a scorpion, and asked, "Where is she?"

"On my ship," was the reply, "if she has not yet been taken ashore with the others."

"To be killed with the pitiable band there?" cried Thyone angrily, looking her son reproachfully in the face.

"No, mother," replied Eumedes. "She will be taken to the others under the escort of trustworthy men in order, perhaps, to induce her to speak. It must be ascertained whether there were accomplices in the attack on the royal palaces, and lastly whence the woman comes."

"I can tell you that myself," replied Hermon. "Allow me to accompany you. I must see and speak to her."

"The Arachne of Tennis?" asked Thyone.

Hermon's mute nod of assent answered the question, but she exclaimed: "The unhappy woman, who called down the wrath of Nemesis upon you, and who has now herself fallen a prey to the avenging goddess. What do you want from her?"

Hermon bent down to his old friend and whispered, "To lighten her terrible fate, if it is in my power."

"Go, then," replied the matron, and turned to her son, saying, "Let Hermon tell you how deeply this woman has influenced his life, and, when her turn comes, think of your mother."

"She is a woman," replied Eumedes, "and the King's mandate only commands me to punish men. Besides, I promised her indulgence if she would make a confession."

"And she?" asked Hermon.

"Neither by threats nor promises," answered the admiral, "can this sinister, beautiful creature be induced to speak."

"Certainly not," said the artist, and a smile of satisfaction flitted over his face.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SHORT row took Hermon and Eumedes to the admiral's galley. Ledscha had already been carried ashore. There she was to be confronted with the men who were suspected of having showed the mutineers the way to the city.

Absorbed in his own thoughts, Hermon waited for the admiral, who at first was claimed by one official duty after another. The artist's thoughts lingered with Daphne. To her father the loss of his house, nay, perhaps of his wealth, would seem almost unendurable, yet even were he beggared, provision was made for him and his daughter. He, Hermon, could again create, as in former days, and what happiness it would be if he were permitted to repay the man to whom he owed so much for the kindness bestowed upon him!

He longed to give to the woman he loved again and again, and it would have seemed to him a favour of fortune if the flames had con-

sumed even the last drachm of her wealthy father.

Completely engrossed by these reflections, he forgot the horrors before him, but when he raised his eyes and saw the archers continuing their terrible work he shuddered.

The admiral's galley lay so near the shore that he distinguished the figures of the Gauls separately. Some, obeying the instinct of self-preservation, fled from the places which could be reached by the arrows of the archers on the ships, but others pressed toward the shafts. A frightful, heart-rending spectacle, yet how rich in food for the long-darkened eyes of the artist! Two brothers of unusual height, who, nude like all their comrades in death, offered their broad, beautifully arched chests to the arrows, would not leave his memory. It was a terrible sight, yet grand and worthy of being wrested from oblivion by art, and it impressed itself firmly on his mind.

After noon Eumedes could at last devote himself to his young friend. Although the wind drove showers of fine rain before it, the admiral remained on deck with the sculptor. What cared they for the inclement weather, while one was recalling to mind and telling his friend how the hate of an offended woman had unchained

the gloomy spirits of revenge upon him, and the other, who had defied death on land and water, listened to his story, sometimes in surprise, sometimes with silent horror?

After the examination to which she had been subjected, Eumedes had believed Ledscha to be as Hermon described her. He found nothing petty in this beautiful, passionate creature who avenged the injustice inflicted upon her as Fate took vengeance, who, with unsparing energy, anticipated the Nemesis to whom she appealed, compelled men's obedience, and instead of enriching herself cast away the talents extorted to bring down fresh ruin upon the man who had transformed her love to hate.

While the friends consulted together with lowered voices, their conjecture became conviction that it was the Biamite's inextinguishable hate which had led her to the Gauls and induced her to share the attack upon the capital.

The assault upon the houses of Archias and Myrtilus was a proof of this, for the latter was still believed to be Hermon's property. She had probably supposed that the merchant's palace sheltered Daphne, in whom, even at Tennis, she had seen and hated her successful rival.

Only the undeniable fact that Ledscha was the bridge-builder's companion presented an

enigma difficult to solve. The freedman Bias had remained on Philippus's galley, and could not now be appealed to for a confirmation of his assertions, but Hermon distinctly remembered his statement that Ledscha had allowed the Gaul, after he had received the money intended for him, to take her from Pitane to Africa.

When the short November day was drawing to a close, and the friends had strengthened themselves with food and drink, the rain ceased and, as the sun set, its after-glow broke through the rifts and fissures in the black wall of clouds in the western horizon like blazing flames in the conflagration of a solid stone building. Yet the glow vanished swiftly enough. The darkness of night spread over the sea and the arid strip of land in the south, but the greedy croaking of the ravens and vultures echoed more and more loudly from the upper air. From time to time the outbursts of rage and agony of despairing men, and horrible jeering laughter, drowned the voices of the flocks of birds and the roaring of the tempestuous sea. Sometimes, too, a sharp word of command, or a signal heard for a long distance, pierced through the awful sounds.

Here and there, and at last everywhere on the squadron, which surrounded the tongue of

land in a shallow curve, dim lights began to appear on the masts and prows of the ships; but darkness brooded over the coast. Only in the three fortified guardhouses, which had been hastily erected here, the feeble light of a lantern illumined the gloom.

Twinkling lights also appeared in the night heavens between the swiftly flying clouds. One star after another began to adorn the blue islands in the cloudy firmament, and at last the full moon burst through the heavy banks of dark clouds, and shone in pure brilliancy above their heads, like a huge silver vessel in the black catafalque of a giant.

At the end of the first hour after sunset Eumedes ordered the boat to be manned.

Armed as if for battle, he prepared for the row to the scene of misery, and requested Hermon to buckle a coat of mail under his chlamys and put on the sword he gave him. True, a division of reliable Macedonian warriors was to accompany them, and Ledscha was in a well-guarded place, yet it might perhaps be necessary to defend themselves against an outburst of despair among the condemned prisoners. On the short trip, the crests of the tossing waves sometimes shone with a flickering light, while elsewhere long shadows spread like dark sails over

the sea. The flat coast on which both men soon stepped was brightly illumined by the moonbeams, and the forms of the doomed men stood forth, like the black figures on the red background of a vase, upon the yellowish-brown sand on which they were standing, running, walking, or lying.

At the western end of the tongue of land a sand hill had been surrounded by a wall and moat, guarded by heavily armed soldiers and several archers. The level ground below had been made secure against any attack, and on the right side was a roof supported by pillars.

The officials intrusted with the examination of the ringleaders had remained during the day in this hastily erected open hut. The latter, bound to posts, awaited their sentence.

The only woman among them was Ledscha, who crouched, unfettered, on the ground behind the inclosure, which consisted of short stakes fastened by a rope.

Without presenting any serious obstacle, it merely indicated how far the prisoners might venture to go. Whoever crossed it must expect to be struck down by an arrow from the wall. This earthwork, it is true, menaced those held captive here, but they also owed it a debt of gratitude, for it shut from their eyes the hor-

rible incidents on the sandy plain between the sea and the inland lake.

This spot was now made as light as day by the rays of the full moon which floated in the pure azure sky far above the black cloud mountains, like a white lotus flower on clear waters, and poured floods of silvery radiance upon the earth.

Eumedes commanded the Macedonians who formed his escort to remain at the fortress on the dune, and, pointing out Ledscha by a wave of the hand, he whispered to Hermon: "By the girdle of Aphrodite! she is terribly beautiful! For whom is the Medea probably brewing in imagination the poisoned draught?"

Then he gave the sculptor permission to promise her immunity from punishment if she would consent at least to explain the Gauls' connection with the royal palaces; but Hermon strenuously refused to undertake this or a similar commission to Ledscha.

Eumedes had expected the denial, and merely expressed to his friend his desire to speak to the Biamite after his interview was over. However refractory she might be, his mother's intercession should benefit her. Hermon might assure her that he, the commander, meant to deal leniently.

He pressed the artist's hand as he spoke, and

walked rapidly away to ascertain the condition of affairs in the other guardhouses.

Never had the brave artist's heart throbbed faster in any danger than on the eve of this meeting; but it was no longer love that thrilled it so passionately, far less hate or the desire to let his foe feel that her revenge was baffled.

It was easy for the victor to exercise magnanimity, and easiest of all for the sculptor in the presence of so beautiful an enemy, and Hermon thought he had never seen the Biamite look fairer. How exquisitely rounded was the oval, how delicately cut the profile of her face, how large were the widely separated, sparkling eyes, above which, even in the pale moonlight, the thick black brows were visible, united under the forehead as if for a dark deed to be performed in common!

Time had rather enhanced than lessened the spell of this wonderful young creature. Now she rose from the ground where she had been crouching and paced several times up and down the short path at her disposal; but she started suddenly, for one of the Gauls bound to the posts, in whom Hermon recognised the bridge-builder, Lutarius, called her name, and when she turned her face toward him, panted in broken Greek like one overwhelmed by despair: "Once

more—it shall be the last time—I beseech you! Lay your hand upon my brow, and if that is too much, speak but one kind word to me before all is over! I only want to hear that you do not hate me like a foe and despise me like a dog. What can it cost you? You need only tell me in two words that you are sorry for your harshness."

"The same fate awaits us both," cried Ledscha curtly and firmly. "Let each take care of himself. When my turn comes and my eyes grow dim in death, I will thank them that they will not show you to me again, base wretch, throughout eternity."

Lutarius shrieked aloud in savage fury, and tore so frantically at the strong ropes which bound him that the firm posts shook, but Ledscha turned away and approached the hut.

She leaned thoughtfully against one of the pillars that supported the roof, and the artist's eyes watched her intently; every movement seemed to him noble and worth remembering.

With her hand shading her brow, she gazed upward to the full moon.

Hermon had already delayed speaking to her too long, but he would have deemed it criminal to startle her from this attitude. So must Arachne have stood when the goddess, in un-

just anger, raised the weaver's shuttle against the more skilful mortal; for while Ledscha's brow frowned angrily, a triumphant smile hovered around her mouth. At the same time she slightly opened her exquisitely formed lips, and the little white teeth which Hermon had once thought so bewitchingly beautiful glittered between them.

Like the astronomer who fixes his gaze and tries to imprint upon his memory some rare star in the firmament which a cloud is threatening to obscure, he now strove to obtain Ledscha's image. He would and could model her in this attitude, exactly as she stood there, without her veil, which had been torn from her during the hand-to-hand conflict when she was captured, with her thick, half-loosened tresses falling over her left shoulder; nay, even with the slightly hooked nose, which was opposed to the old rule of art that permitted only the straight bridge of the nose to be given to beautiful women. Her nature harmonized with the ideal, even in the smallest detail; here any deviation from reality must tend to injure the work.

She remained motionless for minutes in the same attitude, as if she knew that she was posing to an artist; but Hermon gazed at her as if spell-bound till the fettered Gaul again called her name.

Then she left the supporting pillar, approached the barrier, stopped at the rope which extended from one short stake to another, and gazed at the man who was following her outside of the rope.

It was a Greek who stood directly opposite to her. A black beard adorned his grave, handsome countenance. He, too, had a chlamys, such as she had formerly seen on another. Only the short sword, which he wore suspended at his right side in the Hellenic fashion, would not suit that other; but suddenly a rush of hot blood crimsoned her face. As if to save herself from falling, she flung out both arms and clutched a stake with her right and her left hand, thrusting her head and the upper portion of her body across the rope toward the man whose appearance had created so wild a tumult in her whole being.

At last she called Hermon's name in such keen suspense that it fell upon his ear like a shrill cry.

"Ledscha," he answered warmly, extending both hands to her in sincere sympathy; but she did not heed the movement, and her tone of calm self-satisfaction surprised him as she answered: "So you seek me in misfortune? Even the blind man knows how to find me here."

"I would far rather have met you again in the greatest happiness!" he interrupted gently. "But I am no longer blind. The immortals again permit me, as in former days, to feast my eyes upon your marvellous beauty."

A shrill laugh cut short his words, and the "Not blind!" which fell again and again from her lips sounded more like laughter than speech.

There are tears of grief and of joy, and the laugh which is an accompaniment of pleasure is also heard on the narrow boundary between suffering and despair.

It pierced the artist's heart more deeply than the most savage outburst of fury, and when Ledscha gasped: "Not blind! Cured! Rich and possessed of sight, perfect sight!" he understood her fully for the first time, and could account for the smile of satisfaction which had just surprised him on her lips.

He gazed at her, absolutely unable to utter a word; but she went on speaking, while a low, sinister laugh mingled with her tones: "So this is avenging justice! It allows us women to be trampled under foot, and holds its hands in its lap! My vengeance! How I have lauded Nemesis! How exquisitely my retaliation seemed to have succeeded! And now? It was mere delusion and deception. He who was blind

sees. He who was to perish in misery is permitted, with a sword at his side, to gloat over our destruction. Listen, if the good news has not already reached you! I, too, am condemned to death. But what do I care for myself? Even less than those to whom we pray and offer sacrifices for the betrayed woman. Now I am learning to know them! Thus Nemesis thanks me for the lavish gifts I have bestowed upon her? Just before my end she throws you, the rewarded traitor, into my way! I must submit to have the hated foe, whose blinding was the sole pleasure in my ruined life, look me in the face with insolent joy."

Hermon's quick blood boiled.

With fierce resentment he grasped her hand, which lay on the rope, pressed it violently in his strong clasp, and exclaimed, "Stop, mad woman, that I may not be forced to think of you as a poisonous serpent and repulsive spider!"

Ledscha had vainly endeavoured to withdraw her hand while he was speaking. Now he himself released it; but she looked up at him in bewilderment, as if seeking aid, and said sadly: "Once—you know that yourself—I was different—even as long as I supposed my vengeance had succeeded. But now? The false goddess has baffled every means with which I sought to

punish you. Who averted the sorest ill treatment from my head? And I was even defrauded of the revenge which it was my right, nay, my duty, to exercise."

She finished the sentence with drooping head, as if utterly crushed, and this time she did not laugh, but Hermon felt his wrath transformed to sympathy, and he asked warmly and kindly if she would let nothing appease her, not even if he begged her forgiveness for the wrong he had done her, and promised to obtain her life, nay, also her liberty.

Ledscha shook her head gently, and gravely answered: "What is left me without hate? What are the things which others deem best and highest to a miserable wretch like me?"

Here Hermon pointed to the bridge-builder, bound to the post, saying, "Yonder man led you away from the husband whom you had wedded, and from him you received compensation for the love you had lost."

"From him?" she cried furiously, and, raising her voice in a tone of the most intense loathing: "Ask yonder scoundrel himself! Because I needed a guide, I permitted him to take me away from my unloved husband and from the Hydra. Because he would help me to shatter the new and undeserved good fortune which

you—yes, you—do you hear?—enjoyed, I remained with him among the Gauls. More than one Alexandrian brought me the news that you were revelling in golden wealth, and the wretch promised to make you and your uncle beggars if the surprise succeeded. He did this, though he knew that it was you who took him up from the road and saved his life; for nothing good and noble dwells in his knavish soul. He yearned for me, and still more ardently for the Alexandrians' gold. Worse than the wolf that licked the hand of the man who bandaged its wounds, he would have shown his teeth to the preserver of his life. I have learned this, and if he dies here of starvation and thirst he will receive only what he deserves. He knows, too, what I think of him. The greedy beast of prey was not permitted even to touch my hand. Just ask him! There he is. Let him tell you how I listened to his vows of love. Before I would have permitted yonder wretch to recall to life what you crushed in this heart——"

Here Lutarius interrupted her with a flood of savage, scarcely intelligible curses, but very soon one of the guards, who came out of the hut, stopped him with a lash.

When the Gaul, howling under the blows, was silenced, Hermon asked, "So your mad

thirst for vengeance also caused this suicidal attack?"

"No," she answered simply; "but when they determined upon the assault, and had killed their leader, Belgius, yonder monster stole to their head. So it happened—I myself do not know how—that they also obeyed me, and I took advantage of it and induced them to begin with your house and Archias's. When they had captured the royal palaces, they intended to assail the Temple of Demeter also."

"Then you thought that even the terrible affliction of blindness would not suffice to punish the man you hated?" asked Hermon.

"No," she answered firmly; "for you could buy with your gold everything life offers except sight, while in me—yes, in me—gloom darker than the blackest night shrouded my soul. Through your fault I was robbed of all, all that is dear to woman's heart: my father's house, his love, my sister. Even the pleasure in myself which had been awakened by your sweet flatteries was transformed by you into loathing."

"By me?" cried Hermon, amazed by the injustice of this severe reproach; but Ledscha answered his question with the resolute assertion, "By you and you alone!" and then impatiently added: "You, who, by your art, could

transform mortal women into goddesses, wished to make me a humiliated creature, with the rope which was to strangle her about her neck, and at the same time the most repulsive of creeping insects. 'The hideous, gray, eight-legged spider!' I exclaimed to myself, when I raised my arms and saw my shadow on the sunlit ground. 'The spider!' I thought, when I shook the distaff to draw threads from the flax in leisure hours. 'Your image!' I said, when I saw spiders hanging in dusty corners, and catching flies and gnats. All these things made me a horror to myself. And at the same time to know that the Demeter, on whom you bestowed the features of the daughter of Archias, was kindling the whole great city of Alexandria with enthusiasm, and drawing countless worshippers to her sanctuary! She, an object of adoration to thousands, I—the much-praised beauty—a horror to myself! This is what fed my desire for vengeance with fresh food by day and night; this urged me to remain with yonder wretch; for he had promised, after pillaging the royal palaces, to shatter your Demeter, the image of the daughter of Archias, which they lauded and which brought you fame and honour—it was to be done before my eyes—into fragments."

"Mad woman!" Hermon again broke forth

indignantly, and hastily told her how she had been misinformed.

Ledscha's large black eyes dilated as if some hideous spectre was rising from the ground before her, while she heard that the Demeter was the work of Myrtilus and not his; that his friend's legacy had long since ceased to belong to him, and that he was again as poor as when he was in Tennis during the time of their love.

"And the blindness?" she asked sadly.

"It transformed life for me into one long night, illumined by no single ray of light," was the reply; "but, the immortals be praised, I was cured of it, and it was old Tabus, on the Owl's Nest at Tennis, whose wisdom and magic arts you so often lauded, who gave the remedy and advice to which I owe my recovery."

Here he hesitated, for Ledscha had seized the rope with one hand and the stake at her right with the other, in order not to fall upon her knees; but Hermon perceived how terribly his words agitated her, and spoke to her soothingly. Ledscha did not seem to hear him, for while still clinging to the rope she looked sometimes at the sand at her feet, sometimes up to the full moon, which was now flooding both sky and earth with light.

At last she dropped it, and said in a hollow

tone: "Now I understand everything. You met her when Bias gave her the bridal dowry which was to purchase my release from my husband. How it must have enraged her! I thought of it all, pondered and pondered how to spare her; but through whom, except Tabus, could I return to Hanno the property, won in battle by his blood, which he had thrown away for me? Tabus kept the family wealth. And she —the marriage bond which two persons formed was sacred and unassailable—the woman who broke her faith with her husband and turned from him—was an abomination to her. How she loved her sons and grandsons! I knew that she would never forgive the wrong I did Hanno. From resentment to me she cured the man whom I hated."

"Yet probably also," said Hermon, "because my blighted youth aroused her pity."

"Perhaps so," replied Ledscha hesitatingly, gazing thoughtfully into vacancy. "She was what her demons made her. Hard as steel and gentle as a tender girl. I have experienced it. Oh, that she should die with rancour against me in her faithful old heart! She could be so kind!—even when I confessed that you had won my love, she still held me dear. But there are many great and small demons, and most of them were probably subject to her. Tabus must have

learned through them how deeply I offended her son Satabus, and how greatly his son Hanno's life was darkened through me. That is why she thwarted my vengeance, and her spirits aided her. Thus all these things happened. I suspected it when I heard that she had succumbed to death, which I—yes, I here—had held back from her with severe toil through many a sleepless night. O these demons! They will continue to act in the service of the dead. Wherever I may go, they will pursue me and, at their mistress's bidding, baffle what I hope and desire. I have learned this only too distinctly!"

"No, Ledscha, no," Hermon protested. "Every power ceases with death, even that of the sorceress over spirits. You shall be freed, poor woman! You will be permitted to go wherever you desire; and I shall model no spider after your person, but the fairest of women. Thousands will see and admire her, and—if the Muse aids me—whoever, enraptured by her beauty, asks, "Who was the model for this work which inflames the most obdurate heart?' will be told, 'It was Ledscha, the daughter of Shalit, the Biamite, whom Hermon of Alexandria found worthy of carving in costly marble.'"

Ledscha uttered a deep sigh of relief, and asked: "Is that true? May I believe it?"

"As true," he answered warmly, "as that Selene, who promised to grant you in her full radiance the greatest happiness, is now shedding her mild, forgiving light upon us both."

"The full moon," she murmured softly, gazing upward at the shining disk.

Then she added in a louder tone: "Old Tabus's demons promised me happiness—you know. It was the spider which so cruelly shadowed it for me on every full moon, every day, and every night. Will you now swear to model a statue from me, the statue of a beautiful human being that will arouse the delight of all who see it? Delight—do you hear?—not loathing—I ask again, will you?"

"I will, and I shall succeed," he said earnestly, holding out his hand across the rope.

She clasped it, looked up to the full moon again, and whispered: "This time—I will believe it—you will keep your promise better than when you were in Tennis. And I—I will cease to wish you evil, and I will tell you why. Bend your ear nearer, that I may confess it openly."

Hermon willingly obeyed the request, but she leaned her head against his, and he felt her laboured breathing and the warm tears that coursed silently down her cheeks as she said, in a low whisper: "Because the moon is full, and

will yet bring me what the demons promised, and because, though strong, I am still a woman. Happiness! How long ago I ceased to expect it!—but now—yes, it is what I now feel! I am happy, and yet can not tell why. My love—oh, yes! It was more ardent than the burning hate. Now you know it, too, Hermon. And I—I shall be free, you say? And Tabus, how she lauded rest—eternal rest! Oh dearest—this sorely tortured heart, too—you can not even imagine how weary I am!"

Here she was silent, but the man into whose face she was gazing with loving devotion felt a sudden movement at his side as she uttered the exclamation.

He did not notice it, for the sweet tone of her voice was penetrating the inmost depths of his heart. It sounded as though she was speaking from the happiest of dreams.

"Ledscha!" he exclaimed warmly, extending his arm toward her—but she had already stepped back from his side, and he now perceived the terrible object—she had snatched his sword from its sheath, and as, seized by sudden terror, he gazed at her, he saw the shining blade glitter in the moonlight and suddenly vanish.

In an instant he swung his agile body over the rope and rushed to her. But she had already

sunk to her knees, and while he clasped her in his arms to support her, he heard her call his own name tenderly, then murmur it in a lower tone, and the words "Full moon" and "Happiness" escape her lips.

Then she was silent, and her beautiful head dropped on her breast like a flower broken by the tempest.

CHAPTER XVII.

"It was best so for her and for us," said Eumedes, after gazing long at Ledscha's touchingly beautiful, still, dead face.

Then he ordered her to be buried at once and shouted to the guards: "Everything must be over on this strip of land early to-morrow morning! Let all who bear arms begin at once. Selene will light the men brightly enough for the work."

The terrible order given in mercy was fulfilled, and hunger and thirst were robbed of their numerous prey. When the new day dawned the friends were still on deck, engaged in grave conversation. The cloudless sky now arched in radiant light above the azure sea. White seagulls came flying from the right across the ship, and sportive dolphins gambolled around her keel.

The flutes of the musicians, marking time for the rowers, echoed gaily up from the hold, and, obedient to quick words of command, the seamen were spreading the sails.

The voyage began with a favourable wind.

As Hermon looked back for the last time, the flat, desolate tongue of land appeared like a line of gray mist in the southeastern horizon; but over it hovered, like a gloomy thundercloud, the flocks of vultures and ravens, whose numbers were constantly increasing. Their greedy screaming could still be heard, though but faintly, yet the eye could no longer distinguish anything in the fast-vanishing abode of horror, save the hovering whirl of dark spots—ravens and vultures, vultures and ravens.

Whatever human life had moved there yesterday, now rested from bloody greed for booty, after victory and defeat, mortal terror, fury, and despair.

Eumedes pointed out the quiet grave by the sea to his parents, saying: "The King's command is fulfilled. Not even the one man who is usually spared to carry the news remains out of the four thousand."

"I thank you," exclaimed Alexander's gray-haired comrade, shaking his son's right hand, but Thyone laid her hand on Hermon's arm, saying: "Where the birds are darkening the air behind us lies buried what incensed Nemesis against you. You must leave the soil of Egypt. True, it is said that to live in foreign lands, far

from the beloved home, darkens the existence; yet Pergamus, too, is Grecian soil, and there I see the two noblest of stars illumine your path with their pure light—art and love."

And his old friend's premonition was fulfilled.

The story of Arachne is ended. It closed on the Nile. Hermon's new life began in Pergamus.

As Daphne's husband, under the same roof with the wonderfully invigorated Myrtilus, his Uncle Archias, and faithful Bias, Hermon found in the new home what had hovered before the blind man as the fairest goal of existence in art, love, and friendship.

He did not long miss the gay varied life of Alexandria, because he found a rich compensation for it, and because Pergamus, too, was a rapidly growing city, whose artistic decoration was inferior to no other in Greece.

Of the numerous works which Hermon completed in the service of the first three art-loving rulers of the new Pergamenian kingdom, Philetærus, Eumenes, and Attalus, nothing was preserved except the head of a Gaul. This noble masterpiece proves how faithful Hermon remained to truth, which he had early chosen for

the guiding star of his art. It is the modest remnant of the group in which Hermon perpetuated in marble the two Gallic brothers whom he saw before his last meeting with Ledscha, as they offered their breasts to the fatal shafts.

One had gazed defiantly at the arrows of the conquerors; the other, whose head has been preserved, feeling the inevitable approach of death, anticipates, with sorrowful emotion, the end so close at hand. Philetærus had sent this touching work to King Ptolemy to thank him for the severity with which he had chastised the daring of the barbarians, who had not spared his kingdom also. The Gaul's head was again found on Egyptian soil.*

Hermon also took other subjects in Pergamus from the domain of real life, though, in most of his work he crossed the limits which he had formerly imposed upon himself. But one barrier, often as he rushed forward to its outermost verge, he never dared to pass—moderation, the noblest demand, to which his liberty-loving race subjected themselves willingly in life as well as in art. The whole infinite, limitless world of the ideal had opened itself to the blind man.

* Copied in Th. Schrieber's The Head of the Gaul in the Museum of Ghizeh in Cairo. Leipsic, 1896. With appendix. By H. Curschmann.

He made himself at home in it by remaining faithful to the rule which he had found in the desert for his creative work, and the genuine happiness which he enjoyed through Daphne's love and the great fame his sculptures brought him increased the strong individuality of his power.

The fruits of his tireless industry, the much-admired god of light, Phœbus Apollo, slaying the dragons of darkness, as well as his bewitching Arachne, gazing proudly at the fabric with which she thinks she has surpassed the skill of the goddess, were overtaken by destruction. In this statue Bias recognised his countrywoman Ledscha, and often gazed long at it with devout ecstasy. Even Hermon's works of colossal size vanished from the earth: the Battle of the Amazons and the relief containing numerous figures: the Sea Gods, which the Regent Eumenes ordered for the Temple of Poseidon in Pergamus.

The works of his grandson and grandson's pupils, however, are preserved on the great altar of victory in Pergamus.

The power and energy natural to Hermon, the skill he had acquired in Rhodes, everything in the changeful life of Alexandria which had induced him to consecrate his art to reality, and to that alone, and whatever he had, finally, in quiet seclusion, recognised as right and in harmony

with the Greek nature and his own, blend in those works of his successor, which a gracious dispensation of Providence permits us still to admire at the present day, and which we call, in its entirety, the art of Pergamus.

The city was a second beloved home to him, as well as to his wife and Myrtilus. The rulers of the country took the old Alexandrian Archias into their confidence and knew how to honour him by many a distinction. He understood how to value the happiness of his only daughter, the beautiful development of his grandchildren, and the high place that Hermon and Myrtilus, whom he loved as if they were his own sons, attained among the artists of their time. Yet he struggled vainly against the longing for his dear old home. Therefore Hermon deemed it one of the best days of his life when his turn came to make Daphne's father a happy man.

King Ptolemy Philadelphus had sent laurel to the artist who had fallen under suspicion in Egypt, and his messenger invited him and Myrtilus, and with them also the exiled merchant, to return to his presence. In gratitude for the pleasure which Hermon's creation afforded him and his wife, the cause that kept the fugitive Archias from his home should be forgiven and forgotten.

The gray-haired son of the capital returned with the Bithynian Gras to his beloved Alexandria, as if his lost youth was again restored. There he found unchanged the busy, active life, the Macedonian Council, the bath, the market-place, the bewitching conversation, the biting wit, the exquisite feasts of the eyes—in short, everything for which his heart had longed even amid the happiness and love of his dear ones in Pergamus.

For two years he endeavoured to enjoy everything as before; but when the works of the Pergamenian artists, obtained by Ptolemy, had been exhibited in the royal palaces, he returned home with a troubled mind. Like the rest of the world, he thought that the reliefs of Myrtilus, representing scenes of rural life, were wonderful.

The Capture of Proserpina, a life-size marble group by his son-in-law Hermon, seemed to him no less perfect; but it exerted a peculiar influence upon his paternal heart, for, in the Demeter, he recognised Daphne, in the Proserpina her oldest daughter Erigone, who bore the name of Hermon's mother and resembled her in womanly charm. How lovely this budding girl, who was his granddaughter, seemed to the grandfather! How graceful, in spite of the wom-

anly dignity peculiar to her, was the mother, encircling her imperilled child with her protecting arm!

No work of sculpture had ever produced such an effect upon the old patron of art.

Gras heard him, in his bedroom, murmur the names "Daphne" and "Erigone," and therefore it did not surprise him when, the next morning, he received the command to prepare everything for the return to Pergamus. It pleased the Bithynian, for he cared more for Daphne, Hermon, and their children than all the pleasures of the capital.

A few weeks later Archias found himself again in Pergamus with his family, and he never left it, though he reached extreme old age, and was even permitted to gaze in wondering admiration at the first attempts of the oldest son of Hermon and Daphne, and to hear them praised by others.

This grandson of the Alexandrian Archias afterward became the master who taught the generation of artists who created the Pergamenian works, in examining which the question forced itself upon the narrator of this story: How do these sculptures possess the qualities which distinguish them so strongly from the other statues of later Hellenic antiquity?

Did the great weaver Imagination err when she blended them, through the mighty wrestler Hermon, with a tendency of Alexandrian science and art, which we see appearing again among us children of a period so much later?

Science, which is now once more pursuing similar paths, ought and will follow them further, but Hermon's words remain applicable to the present day: "We will remain loyal servants of the truth; yet it alone does not hold the key to the holy of holies of art. To him for whom Apollo, the pure among the gods, and the Muses, friends of beauty, do not open it at the same time with truth, its gates will remain closed, no matter how strongly and persistently he shakes them."

THE END.

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